

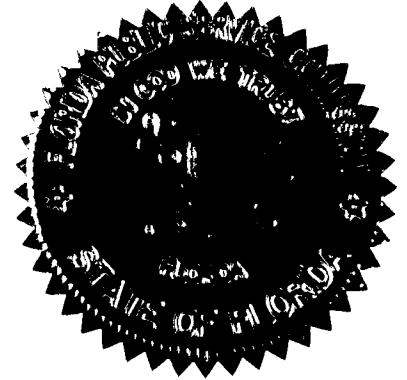
BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 991222-TP

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In The Matter of

IMPLEMENTATION OF FLORIDA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS
SYSTEM ACT OF 1991.



PROCEEDINGS: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Friday, September 19, 2003

TIME: Commenced at 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: Palm Beach Governmental Center
 Chambers
 West Palm Beach, Florida

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE
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FPSC-COMMISSION OF FPC

1 IN ATTENDANCE.

2 RICK KOTTLER, Deaf Service Center Association.

3 CHRISTOPHER D. WAGNER, President, Florida Association
4 of the Deaf, Inc.

5 ROBERT GIUNTOLI, Sprint.

6 NANCY SCHNITZER, SPRINT.

7 JIMMY PETERSON, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of
8 North Florida, Inc.

9

10 FOR THE FPSC:

11 BETH SALAK, RICK MOSES, BOB CASEY and
12 SUSAN HOWARD, FPSC Division of Competitive Services.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. SALAK: Good morning. I want to welcome you all to
3 the TASA meeting today. I thought we could start with
4 introductions. I will start. I'm Beth Salak, I'm the TASA
5 administrator for the State of Florida. We work at the Florida
6 Public Service Commission. And you can have our name -- we're on
7 the Web site, and you can get our name, and want to contact us
8 any time, we would appreciate it.

9 We'll start at the end, and we will let the staff
10 members introduce themselves. And I will probably tell you how
11 wonderful they are, because they are.

12 MS. HOWARD: Hi, I'm Susan Howard, I'm an
13 administrative assistant with the Florida Public Service
14 Commission.

15 MS. SALAK: She's sort of our backbone. She let's
16 everyone know, she keeps people in the loop, let's us all know
17 what is happening. She's responsible for all the paperwork, and
18 keeps us straight most of the time.

19 MR. CASEY: My name is Bob Casey. I'm a supervisor
20 that works in Beth Salak's division, in Communications. I'm the
21 newest member up here, and still learning.

22 MS. SALAK: He's a very welcome member. You will find
23 Bob a willing listener and very technically oriented at the same
24 time.

25 MR. MOSES: Rick Moses, I'm the Bureau Chief of the

1 Bureau of Service Quality.

2 MS. SALAK: You'll be hearing from Rick soon in some of
3 the work he has been doing in the quality area.

4 I would like to give the board members an opportunity
5 to introduce themselves, and tell you who they represent here
6 today. We can start with Jimmy.

7 MR. PETERSON: I'm Jimmy Peterson. And I'm a member of
8 the FAD Board.

9 MS. SALAK: I'm sorry, this was all going to be
10 transcribed today. So if you could get to a microphone, I would
11 appreciate it. And I should have said that all up front. This
12 is all going to be transcribed and will be available on the Web
13 site for everyone to read. Thank you. If we could have everyone
14 at the microphone, I would appreciate it. Sorry to interrupt
15 you, Jimmy.

16 MR. PETERSON: Fine. My name is Jim Peterson, I'm the
17 representative of Florida Association (inaudible).

18 MS. SALAK: Thank you.

19 MR. WAGNER: My name is Chris Wagner, I'm president of
20 Florida Association of the Deaf, President of FAD.

21 MR. KOTTLER: I'm Rick Kottler, I'm the Director of the
22 Deaf Service Center of the Treasure Coast and President of the
23 Deaf Service Center Association of Florida.

24 MS. SCHNITZER: I'm Nancy Schnitzer, I'm employed with
25 Sprint in Tallahassee, but I'm here on behalf of all of the local

1 exchange companies in the State of Florida.

2 MS. SALAK: Thank you. We have several representatives
3 from Sprint Relay here today, and I would love for them to take
4 the opportunity for each of them to stand and tell everyone who
5 they are and what they do at Sprint. I only see one in the
6 room right now. Oh, I see three. Excuse me.

7 MR. GANTT: Hello, my name is Greg. I'm the manager of
8 Florida Relay Service. Greg Gantt from Sprint.

9 MS. SCHOOLAR: Hi everyone, I'm Maggie Schoolar. I'm
10 the salesperson responsible for Florida Relay. Nice to meet
11 everybody.

12 MS. SALAK: And we're lucky today to have two
13 representatives here from the Relay Center in Miami. Walter and
14 Louis, if you could stand up and tell us what you do for the
15 Relay Center, I would appreciate it.

16 MR. BERGER: Good morning, everyone. As Beth said, we
17 certainly are appreciative of the opportunity to come and
18 speak with you today and be present for your meeting. My name
19 is Walter Berger, I'm the Director of Operations for Precision
20 Response Corporation, and my immediate responsibility is
21 obviously the relay product that we have put out.

22 MR. PEDROSA: I'm Louis Pedrosa (phonetic), I'm the
23 training manager for the Relay Center. Good to meet you all.

24 MS. SALAK: Thank you. And each of us are here to
25 listen to the concerns of the community and see what we can do to

1 improve service and improve the quality of life in Florida. We
2 thought today that -- I'm just going to get a few preliminaries
3 out of the way. You each should have a package at your desk,
4 each of the advisory members, that will be your reimbursement
5 form. If you can fill it out, we will take it back and get it
6 processed as soon as possible. I think you have all done that
7 except for you, maybe, Jim. And, Jim, if you need help with it,
8 just let us know and we'll get the processing done for you.
9 Those all go to Susan, and she actually will handle all of that
10 for you.

11 At our last advisory meeting, we had an extensive
12 discussion about quality of service. We took your comments very
13 seriously, and we first started by meeting with Sprint. The PSC
14 met with Sprint to see how we could handle some of those issues.
15 I'm going to ask Mr. Moses to come and tell you some of the
16 additional measures we've taken at the Commission, and then we'll
17 have Sprint come and tell you some of the measures they have
18 taken to improve that service since that point in time. So I'm
19 going to start with Mr. Moses.

20 MR. MOSES: Well, as Beth mentioned, we were starting
21 to get some complaints primarily about accent problems, where
22 people were having a hard time using the relay system because
23 they couldn't understand the CA. In working with Sprint, the
24 important information that they needed in order to address the
25 problem was the operator number.

1 So most people we were finding when they would complain
2 didn't have the operator number or the time of day or the day
3 that they made the call. So we began a testing program where we
4 were making our own test calls through the relay system, and that
5 way we could get the operator number and exactly what happened on
6 the call. And we handled both ends of the conversations, so we
7 knew what happened on both ends.

8 And in doing so, we started in May, and I can read out
9 the results that we have found so far. In May we made 72 calls.
10 The typing speed on those -- and I will talk more about typing
11 speed in a little bit. The results were 33 of those calls were
12 below 60 words per minute. We found seven CAs that had an accent
13 problem to the point that they were not understandable. We
14 didn't mark them down as accents if we just heard an accent, but
15 only if it interfered with the conversation to where we could not
16 carry on the conversation with the accent. And then we found 23
17 instances of those calls to where there was information either
18 transposed or affected to the point where it affected the
19 conversation and affected the validity of the conversation.

20 In June we did 56 calls, 14 of the CAs didn't type the
21 typing speed of 60 words per minute. We found three CAs with
22 accent problems in that month, and then there were 19 mistakes
23 that we found on the text of the messages.

24 In July we stepped up the testing, we made 250 calls.
25 47 of those were below the 60 words per minute. We didn't find

1 any accent problems, and then 78 had mistakes in it.

2 In August we did 300 calls. The typing speed of 132 of
3 them were below the standard. We only found one with an accent
4 problem, and 71 of the calls had mistakes in it.

5 We're continuing to do the 300 level each month, and we
6 will continue to do so. Sprint is also doing some test calls,
7 and we're going to compare notes on those to see if we can
8 identify any future problems with any CAs. And we've been
9 working closely with Sprint. We've also met with PRC. They have
10 committed to making corrections in these things, and Greg Gantt,
11 I believe, is going to have a presentation on the commitments
12 they have made.

13 Let's see, is there any -- oh, on the typing speed. In
14 fairness to Sprint, my staff was not timing the typing speed in
15 the manner of which it was truly just measuring the typing when
16 we started out. A lot of times we were speaking fairly fast for
17 the CA, and they would have to ask us to retransmit what we were
18 trying to tell them, and we didn't stop the clock while they were
19 talking to the person that was on the hearing side of it, which
20 skewed the results a little bit.

21 This next month's test calls, that has been changed.
22 They are stopping the clock when the typing stops, and they are
23 starting it when the typing begins. So they are only going to be
24 measuring just the actual typing speed. And the way we're
25 measuring it is we are counting all of the characters, all of the

1 spaces during that period of time, and then dividing it by 5,
2 which is the industry standard for an average length of word.
3 Are there any questions that I can answer? Yes.

4 MR. WAGNER: I have a question. What kind of test
5 calls, VCO or TTY calls? What kind of test are you making?

6 MR. MOSES: We're doing TTY-to-voice on the other side
7 and we're doing it that way. And we're using 63 different
8 scripts, so none of the CAs can get used to the script, knowing
9 that we're doing the testing.

10 MR. WAGNER: Okay. Have you tried Voice Carry Over
11 assisted calls yet?

12 MR. MOSES: No, we have not.

13 MS. SALAK: Chris, do you believe that we should?

14 MR. WAGNER: Yes. I think we should try all of them.
15 Because a lot of the hard-of-hearing people complain about the
16 Voice Carry Over system calls, also. Not just TTY calls. Also
17 look at the VCO system, also. And also to test the speech calls,
18 also.

19 MS. SALAK: Okay.

20 MR. MOSES: If there are no further questions, Greg
21 Gantt can come up and give his presentation on what Sprint is
22 doing in addressing these problems that we've identified.

23 MR. GANTT: Hello. I'm pleased for the opportunity to
24 be here to present to you, and to give you a short talk about how
25 Sprint plans for the Florida Relay services. Can we turn that

1 on?

2 Here with us is Maggie Schoolar, and I'm Greg Gantt,
3 and our former Florida Relay Director, Robert Giuntoli. Also
4 Rick Mantoni.

5 We heard feedback from the community April, May, June
6 about the credibility of the services. So we did our analysis on
7 the feedback, and we identified these areas, these issues. The
8 operations issues and also the marketing issues.

9 Next.

10 Accent. Sprint interviewed all the CAs that seemed to
11 have some sort of accent. And we tested them, and we identified
12 them.

13 In the testing, some CAs did a very good job in what
14 they did, so we moved them to another area in the call center.
15 Recently we did some testing, PRC and I, and we -- in July and
16 August and we tested some more calls, and it really improved.
17 The accents went way, way down.

18 So then the typing and the reading also of the typing.
19 We had some issues with some of the CAs and their typing, and the
20 CAs who could not get above that 60-word standard, we gave them a
21 refresher course, and we trained them some more. And they went
22 into, you know, to the courses, and the PRC met with them, with
23 Rick and the other staff, and Don, they all got together and they
24 had a meeting, and they tested the methodology. And we all
25 agreed on one way, and we will have that one standard of measure

1 from now on, and that's how we will watch the end results as they
2 come in.

3 We did about 300 tests ourselves, also. We did more
4 than 300. I think we did 500 to 600. You're talking about 300,
5 we're doing 500 to 600 a month. So our testing is more
6 intensive.

7 Verbatim. For those of you who don't understand what
8 verbatim means, they're supposed to say everything they hear.
9 Everything goes back and forth both ways. The CAs that did not
10 seem to be doing things 100 percent verbatim, that was the
11 complaint, so we met with them one-on-one, and we did some
12 additional training and testing, and we emphasized the importance
13 of verbatim, everything that is said, everything that is heard.

14 So then we did some additional watching, and we
15 identified four CAs who continued to have problems with that
16 verbatim issue, so we laid them off. Just four.

17 Pacing. We heard some feedback from the community that
18 some of the CAs would be talking at the same time they were
19 typing. They weren't waiting. Or they would tell the person to
20 wait. They would be too slow. It was just a very awkward
21 conversation, it wasn't a normal conversation. I know relay
22 calls are not going to be like normal, but we expect our CAs to
23 be typing in a smooth way, at least to pace themselves so the
24 pace was continuous. So we did some more training, and we got
25 that issue resolved.

1 How have we done since we heard feedback from the
2 community and PRC on the marketing with the Florida Public
3 Service Commission. We met with you guys and our staff, and
4 again, we all got together and discussed first the marketing.

5 The feedback said that they felt that Sprint was not
6 visible enough in the community, okay? That means it's our
7 responsibility, it's something we have to be out there with. We
8 have to be out in the community more often, okay. So we
9 discussed this issue, and what role are we expected to do. And
10 we all agreed that we would focus, as the Florida Relay. TRS.
11 We needed to -- Sprint needed to be out there and continue to
12 talk about the video relay and other relay issues. And that way
13 we can be on top of everything. We can be on top of the issues,
14 because we're out there in the community, and with the FTRI, and
15 with the deaf associations.

16 And we also had a meeting with FTRI, Jim Forstall and
17 his staff, and how should we market, how should we support them,
18 how can they support us, that kind of thing. It was a group
19 effort between the two of us. And ever since then what we've
20 been doing is we have -- we went to the south deaf showcase in
21 Tampa two weeks ago, and we were there. We worked together
22 there. We were there together. We had other Sprint workers in
23 their own area, in the VRS, the video relay, but we did our own
24 separate one with them.

25 We were involved with the FTRI's fall conference

1 scheduled for the first week of November, we'll be there. We
2 will be presenting there with FTRI, and many people will come to
3 that and see us, and we will show how we are working together.

4 And also we worked on new development of different
5 things that we can present, that we can do in marketing outreach
6 efforts with Jim, ever since we've been doing that with FTRI.

7 What are we doing now as we go forward? We're
8 continuing to focus on the accent issue through testing and
9 feedback from the community. Feedback from the community is
10 very, very important. When things come in, we immediately take
11 action with the complaints, with the issues. Especially on
12 accent.

13 And typing, typing also. We recently got together with
14 the Florida Public Service Commission, and we came up with a time
15 frame to set up between us where we agreed we will go on with
16 testing, it will continue, and we will do it together.

17 You see, we are continuing to test 100 calls a week.
18 The Public Service Commission is also testing. So between those
19 two, we will have plenty. When we test and we see the mistake,
20 or when we receive a complaint from the community, we review it
21 immediately, and we go one-on-one and put that person in
22 training. We pull them out, they get offline immediately. We
23 don't keep them online. We train them offline until they
24 improve. When they are successful, we put them back online.

25 Also, we're doing remote monitoring. We're watching

1 them from afar, remote monitoring. It's a process where in the
2 call center we have the CAs, they're all in this room, and then
3 we have one supervisor, in an office. And they randomly choose a
4 call that a CA is doing, anyone in the room at that time, and
5 they listen in and watch that call.

6 And so it's a live, it's a live happening thing right
7 then and there. At that point in the call the CA does not know
8 they are being monitored. So it is a true check of their skill
9 and how they are doing in their pacing.

10 Third, we're giving refresher training for all the CAs.
11 It doesn't matter how long they've been there, how good they're
12 doing. It doesn't matter. We still want them in these refresher
13 courses so that we can review all the call process.

14 The team managers in the call center, we have meetings
15 -- they have meetings with the CAs one-on-one, and they impress
16 upon them the importance of the call process, and of the pacing,
17 and of the typing, and all of those issues. And I want to show
18 you that we do take this very seriously. These concerns, we take
19 them very seriously. At the call center manager we are all
20 personally involved. We personally review each complaint to make
21 sure that we are keeping up and keeping the people satisfied.

22 And we will continue to monitor the quality of services
23 through the testing, through the feedback from the community, and
24 our internal monitoring as well.

25 Sprint will increase its visibility. How? By being

1 here, by going to different meetings, by being involved in
2 different community things, all different events, any kind of
3 things that are going on, we will show up there. We went to the
4 Southern Deaf Showcase, and we worked with FTRI. We're going to
5 the Florida Association of the Deaf Roadshow. They've given us
6 their schedule in Florida. Sprint will have some kind of showing
7 at every meeting there, so that we can hear feedback from the
8 community.

9 As a matter of fact, I'm going tonight to the FAD
10 Roadshow, and then tomorrow night Robert will go.

11 Joining with FTRI. How is this possible? The Southern
12 Deaf Showcase shows that it is. And we will be -- in some
13 situations where Sprint can't be there, FTRI will go. And they
14 will be visible. And then the same, if FTRI cannot show up for
15 something, Sprint will go and represent them as well. So we're
16 working with each other, we are partnering in this outreach.

17 One of the issues with the complaints that we found
18 awhile back, some people who filed a complaint, it went to
19 another area. And they didn't know what to do with it, so they
20 just left it there. So complaints were filed into the wrong
21 places. So we've streamlined this process.

22 This is not -- this is a strong suggestion. This is
23 not written in stone, but this is how we would like to use it
24 when people file complaints. So we don't want people filing --
25 you can file with whoever you want to, that is correct, that's

1 not a problem. But this is going to help us solve the problems
2 faster if we do it this way. So if you have an issue with a CA
3 you can request a supervisor online right then and there during
4 the call, while it's fresh. And we have the supervisor there,
5 and the coach there.

6 If that's not possible, you can file the complaint with
7 the user service 24/7. All complaints filed with the user
8 service go to me. I am the responsible person to take that, and
9 I will take it up with each one, and I will solve each one. I
10 will listen to the problem, and I will try and solve each
11 problem. I will take the appropriate action to solve it. Or,
12 they file it directly with me through e-mail, and I will take the
13 responsibility to solve that complaint.

14 If they're not satisfied with any of those things, they
15 can always file with the Public Service Commission. And what
16 will they do? It will eventually get to me for follow-up with
17 the user, and I will try to solve it with the user, and then I
18 will respond back to you, to the Florida Public Service
19 Commission.

20 And I promise, the quality of services for the Florida
21 Relay for the community will improve. We will become more
22 visible, we will be there for you, our users. And I want you to
23 be able to see a warm body to contact us, give you ways to
24 communicate with us, to contact me, to contact FTRI who will also
25 be involved in this outreach effort. We will continue to focus

1 on improving and giving quality service for all the Florida Relay
2 users. And I hope that you have understood the presentation.

3 MS. SALAK: Does anybody --

4 MR. GANTT: One of the issues -- I'm sorry.

5 MS. SALAK: No, you go ahead.

6 MR. GANTT: The user contact, you know, the discussion
7 we had, remember back in May that we talked about the format? Or
8 in June? We studied and we picked these out, these different
9 formats, and made several suggestions to change this form with
10 James Forstall. And we looked, and it seemed -- it was a
11 challenge for some of the things that were presented to change.
12 So we went back and we copied and compared, and the user profile
13 itself, the system is wide open. So the user profile for all the
14 state that Sprint uses to give services, we need to change it.
15 It impacts everything.

16 So we're making some changes, and we have several
17 suggestions on the profile. So at this point we're not ready to
18 give it out to you, but we're in process of setting up a new
19 platform called "next generation."

20 So this next generation will -- maybe next year. That
21 will give the possibilities to make changes in the user profile.
22 Because the next generation platform itself will open up the
23 architecture of that, meaning that we can change it, we can make
24 changes to it. Right now we can't. So it's more flexible there,
25 with the new platform. It's user friendly with that. The user

1 profile will be easier to change, and it will match better.

2 For example, one of the things presented, the user --
3 I'm the user. I have a deaf wife in the same house. We share
4 the same phone number. But right now, to set that up, we're
5 limited to one user profile on that one number. It's me or my
6 wife. Which one?

7 So it's very limited right now. With this next
8 generation platform, we will have the possibility to add on my
9 user name separate, even though we use the same telephone number.
10 Okay?

11 MS. SALAK: You were just discussing the profiles. I
12 have two questions. One, at the last advisory meeting we
13 discussed that there really hadn't been any changes made to it,
14 but Sprint did accommodate all the changes they could make right
15 after that, without changing the platform.

16 MR. GANTT: Yes, we did two, two changes.

17 MS. SALAK: Actually, I thought you did several. There
18 were several that you made.

19 MR. GANTT: We received a whole list of requests of
20 changes, and I thought we were only -- it was only possible to
21 make two in the form, and we gave that all out already.

22 MS. SALAK: I believe there were several more that you
23 made. There were several that you made, in response to what --
24 after your meetings with staff and with FTRI. You did make -- I
25 just need to confirm that. Yes, you did make several. I'm just

1 trying to say that you did accommodate all the changes that were
2 possible before changing the platform.

3 MR. GANTT: That's right.

4 MS. SALAK: Now, do you have an implementation date for
5 the platform in Florida or when it will happen? Do you have a
6 time line like within the next year or --

7 MR. GANTT: I think Maggie could answer that question
8 better.

9 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes, the whole new next generation
10 platform will be rolled in 2004. We're starting to roll it in
11 December, and I can't remember right now where Florida is on the
12 list, being such a large state, I think you're probably going to
13 roll in the summertime. But it will be rolled before the end of
14 2004, and probably well before fourth quarter 2004.

15 MS. SALAK: Thank you.

16 MR. GANTT: I would like to add to what Maggie said,
17 that the rollout is staged. So we will do several states at a
18 time, several states at a time, we will do it that way. As soon
19 as we know the schedule for the rollout, I will let you know.

20 MS. SALAK: Thank you.

21 Did anyone have any questions for Greg? He covered a
22 lot of things. He covered quality of service and the action plan
23 from Sprint. Rick?

24 MR. KOTTLER: First of all, I'm going to say
25 congratulations because you've done a lot of work since the end

1 of May when I got Mr. Rollins letter saying there was no problem
2 with the Florida Relay Service. One area that I think you need
3 to address, and I believe I spoke with Maggie about this briefly
4 the last time we saw your presentation, is in the area of
5 accuracy.

6 Typing speed is one thing, but accurate typing is
7 something else. And, you know, when I asked the question of what
8 are the requirements for an operator, it was a high school
9 diploma. That does not always mean that that person has a good
10 comprehension of English. You know, you can get out of high
11 school with an 8th grade understanding of English. And I want to
12 suggest that you test, either use a TABE test or something for
13 those operators to make sure that there is a minimum level of
14 comprehension.

15 The other thing in this was at the Deaf Service Center
16 Association meeting yesterday. We discussed the procedure for
17 complaints. And I think for the time being, until we are
18 comfortable that things are progressing smoothly, our first stop
19 with the complaint is going to be to Rick Moses. And we decided
20 that as a group. We will let you know, but we're going to start
21 there and move backwards. In the past, and not necessarily all
22 with Sprint and other providers, in the past we have felt that
23 there is a lot of, shall we say, pushing the complaints under the
24 carpet so nobody knows about them. That's why until we feel
25 comfortable that things are really changed, this is going to be

1 our approach. And we hope you will be understanding about that.
2 Thank you.

3 MS. SALAK: Rick, along those veins, if that is your
4 vehicle of choice to complain, which is fine, great. There are a
5 couple ways to do it. If you go online with the Public Service
6 Commission and file a complaint online, you can do it that way.
7 You can e-mail Rick directly or any of us directly, and our
8 e-mail addresses are on the Web page. You can call, too. But
9 what I want to tell you is that if you file online and it goes to
10 our consumer group, they are on alert that anything that has to
11 do with Relay comes to us. And so it automatically will come to
12 us. So you don't specifically have to know any of our e-mail
13 addresses. If you just do it generically, it will come to us, if
14 you click on Relay.

15 MR. KOTTLER: What we have is we have a general form
16 that we have put together that we are using, and it literally is
17 faxed to you. It's faxed to your group. It's not just faxed to
18 Rick or anybody, but just to your general fax number.

19 MS. SALAK: And we will get it then. And we will
20 actually put Consumer Affairs on alert to get them to us for
21 sure.

22 MR. GANTT: Rick, I would like to let you know that any
23 complaints filed with the Florida Public Service Commission, with
24 anyone, they all get solved. And then we also report to the
25 Florida Public Service Commission monthly on all the complaints,

1 no matter where they're from.

2 MS. SALAK: I just wanted to ask. As you know, we've
3 been working on this for several months now, since the last
4 advisory meeting, starting the following week we met with Sprint
5 and had several conference calls. We worked on the profile, we
6 worked on the quality of service issues. I'm just curious, from
7 your constituents and who you represent, and from our testing we
8 believe that it's improving, from the results that we're getting.
9 Has anyone noticed? I mean, has anybody noticed, or do they
10 still feel we're at the same level? Or is it just too soon? It
11 could just be too soon, too.

12 MR. KOTTLER: We hear the complaints, but we don't
13 always hear from people when they have had a good call. So it's
14 kind of hard to say.

15 MS. SALAK: Yes, we understand that. You don't notice
16 the number trailing off for you?

17 MR. KOTTLER: From my office, we don't use the Relay
18 that much, because we have direct TDD lines to everybody. So, it
19 is really -- there is nothing in it -- nobody is coming to us
20 saying how wonderful it is right now. And, of course, you get
21 one person with a problem, that's the one we're going to hear
22 about.

23 THE INTERPRETER: I have a person that wants to speak.

24 MS. SALAK: Yes, sir.

25 MR. GRANDA: Hello, my name is Jose Granda, and I'm

1 from Miami. I represent the Deaf Services Bureau. First, I
2 would like to recognize that the evaluation and the testing and
3 all the things that are going on, they're from the -- you know,
4 they're from Miami. Half the people, I think, have moved to PRC
5 are in Miami now. So the testing is -- they're passing. They're
6 getting faster. The time -- many times they're feeding --

7 MR. WAGNER: I want to make sure it matches.

8 THE INTERPRETER: I'm sorry, I will repeat it again.
9 I'm sorry.

10 MR. GRANDA: Before, the Relay service was under MCI,
11 and they took about half of the people to PRC. And they are
12 very skilled people. And -- very experienced. They've been
13 there a very long time. Okay? Those people have no excuses,
14 they've been there a long time. So for three years now it's
15 been PRC.

16 The other thing I'm saying is the Spanish -- the
17 frustration of the Spanish CAs with the user clients, in the
18 Spanish community, that's something they are offering is
19 Spanish. They are not offering -- they are not offering
20 Spanish language. They say no.

21 So where is the access? So when you evaluate your
22 tests, is that something you look for? It's time. It's time.

23 MS. SALAK: One moment. Are you telling me that when
24 you ask for -- I'm sorry. Are you saying that when you ask for a
25 Spanish CA that you're not getting a Spanish CA?

1 MR. GRANDA: No.

2 MS. SALAK: Chris.

3 MR. WAGNER: I was planning on bringing that. Recently
4 FAD, the road tour, was in Miami, in July. Many people -- that
5 was the first time I learned of this, but many people said there
6 is no Spanish Relay available, like on the weekend. And I'm
7 like, what?

8 So that's something that we have to -- I had planned to
9 bring up today. So you're right to address that. Many people
10 say that they contact, they want to contact family members on the
11 weekend, you know, and there is no Spanish Relay available.

12 MS. SALAK: And you're not talking about video relay;
13 you're talking about regular relay service?

14 MR. GRANDA: Yes, regular relay service.

15 MS. SALAK: Would someone like to respond? Maggie.

16 MS. SCHOOLAR: This issue came up when we met a month
17 ago, and we went back and we've been testing it, and we've had no
18 problems accessing Spanish TRS overnight, on the weekends, at any
19 time. So our operations group, you know, has given us some
20 spreadsheets of all the testing they've done. So we're not sure
21 where that's coming from. Now, we did cut off Spanish Video
22 Relay Service, and we were providing it. And now there is no
23 VRS. And the Spanish community is very upset about that.

24 MR. GRANDA: Why?

25 MS. SCHOOLAR: Because of the cutbacks on the

1 reimbursement rate federally. We're just not able to afford it
2 right now. But that is something that our Spanish community is
3 very, very upset about. So I'm not sure if that is the feedback
4 we're getting or not.

5 MR. GRANDA: Well, generally, you know, we understand
6 that it's an afford thing. Because most of the deaf Spanish
7 community can't afford the video anyway. So --

8 MR. GANTT: May I add something?

9 MS. SALAK: Yes.

10 MR. GANTT: Like Maggie said, we looked at that
11 problem. We're sensitive to that issue, and we also talked or
12 heard about it at the Southern Deaf Showcase. And, again, you
13 know, sometimes we need to know what day? What time? We're not
14 getting that information.

15 So we've already tested with PRC, and we will continue
16 to provide Spanish 24/7. Why some people have not been
17 successful, the users themselves, I don't know. Maybe it's not
18 instantaneous, maybe that's the problem. I don't know. But
19 we're going to continue to check that.

20 MR. WAGNER: I have a question.

21 MS. SALAK: Yes.

22 MR. WAGNER: How many CAs on each shift speak Spanish?
23 How many? Can you help me with that?

24 MR. BERGER: Absolutely. During the day, at any giver
25 time, Monday through Friday, we have anywhere from 12 to 15,

1 up to 30 Spanish agents available. On the weekends we have
2 anywhere from 15 agents available. Our occupancy on the
3 Spanish gate is 40 percent. So 40 percent of our agents are
4 being used when we have them available. So if there's an
5 issue, we would love to hear about it. If there's a time, or
6 you can't get Spanish agents, because generally most of the
7 time they are waiting for a call. So we would certainly love
8 to increase the occupancy on that gate. That would be great
9 for us. That helps us out. Absolutely.

10 THE INTERPRETER: She has a question.

11 MS. SMITH: Hello. My name is Kim Smith. I'm the
12 treasurer for the Florida Association of the Deaf. I have one
13 specific issue related to the complaints. I was looking at
14 the PowerPoint that Greg presented, and I couldn't memorize
15 that TTY number, the toll-free number for the complaints, and
16 I wondered how is this number advertised throughout the State
17 of Florida? How is it advertised? I haven't seen it. I
18 haven't seen, you know, that complaint telephone number, the
19 contact number.

20 Is it advertised on the Web site? Is that where it's
21 shown? Anyway, I haven't seen it anywhere. And I would like
22 to present to you that maybe we can find something to present
23 to people how they can file a complaint, who they should call
24 right away.

25 MR. GANTT: Kim, thank you for reminding me of that. :

1 wanted to cover that in my presentation. Yes, we have a
2 complaint -- you know, sometimes it's confusing, who do we
3 complain to? So we have changed that. We have streamlined that
4 also. And we have worked with Mr. Forstall. Also we're changing
5 things how is the best way to let everyone know how to file a
6 complaint. So we have all these different ways. We have
7 telephone numbers, e-mail, FTRI on their Web site, it's there.
8 FTRI.org. It will be on there, on how to file a complaint.

9 And I will continue to improve -- it won't only be
10 e-mail, because I understand some people don't have access to
11 e-mail or online. So we will give out things through the service
12 agencies.

13 MS. SMITH: Okay. I'm not satisfied with that comment

14 MS. SALAK: I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said?

15 MS. SMITH: I'm pleased to hear that you're making an
16 effort. One thing is that you mentioned that there is a
17 supervisor available to monitor at random the different
18 situations as they're going on during live calls, okay. Each
19 call has already been given out to the caller -- maybe --
20 okay. They've already informed the caller to let them now
21 that this call may be monitored, you know, for quality
22 assurance. You know that thing you hear sometimes when you
23 call different agencies, when you call different companies?
24 So they know supervisors are on the line watching. They may
25 be on the line. So isn't it breaking confidentiality to do

1 that call? If they don't say this call will be monitored at
2 any time, so it will be selected at random? You know, we know
3 that will be selected randomly, but we must let everyone know,
4 the callers know that. Did you understand my point?

5 MS. SALAK: Your point is that -- well, the way I
6 understand it is that you think that by not announcing there will
7 be somebody coming on, that it is violating the confidentiality
8 of the call?

9 MS. SMITH: Yes. For example, I'm a frequent user of
10 FRS on the TTY. And I've made several calls of a financial
11 transaction over the phone without fully knowing that my call
12 may be monitored by a supervisor, and maybe I don't trust that
13 supervisor. I know there is a promise of confidentiality, but
14 I was never informed during that call, nobody ever said: This
15 call may be monitored for quality purposes. That's something
16 that you need to announce, no matter, on every call.

17 MS. SALAK: I will tell you, there are laws that
18 require that those phone calls cannot be -- must be kept
19 confidential. That would apply to both the CA and the
20 supervisor. Just to comfort you now, I'm not dismissing your
21 idea. I'm just telling you that to comfort you today, to assure
22 you that those calls will be kept confidential.

23 MS. SMITH: Yes, but I think I would like to see that
24 kind of announcement, some sort of announcement.

25 MS. SALAK: Uh-huh. I understand. Were there any more

1 questions of Mr. Gantt, or the quality of service program, or any
2 other issues we've discussed this morning? Yes, Rick.

3 MR. KOTTLER: Can we revisit VCO real quick?

4 MS. SALAK: Sure.

5 MR. KOTTLER: We talked about testing that, and that's
6 very important. One of the things that came out of the meeting
7 yesterday was a lot of us that do phone distribution, we're
8 giving out the VCOs and we're getting them back just that fast
9 because people were having difficulty using it, understanding the
10 operators, the calls are difficult, you have to dial a different
11 number, there are a lot of issues with it. That I think a lot of
12 them are quality. Some of them are because of the age of the
13 population that we're trying to give these phones to, it's a
14 little bit complicated. But there are still some operator
15 issues, and it would be a really good thing if you started to do
16 a few of those tests just as a quality control measure. We would
17 appreciate it.

18 MS. SALAK: I am sure that Mr. Moses has heard you
19 today, and that he will be working on Monday on how to
20 incorporate that into our program. I have absolutely no doubt.

21 MR. MOSES: Right.

22 MS. SALAK: Other questions? Yes, sir.

23 MR. J. CASEY: My name is Jim Casey. My wife uses the
24 Florida Relay Service more than I do. There was one issue
25 that never turned into a complaint, but I thought why not

1 here, because I think everyone has a right to know what's
2 going on.

3 My wife uses FRS. My wife loves cross-stitching, and
4 had them contact a cross-stitching or sewing store. The
5 operator tried to explain to this store about the Relay, and
6 the woman hung up. And we didn't think anything was wrong
7 with it. So we visit the store. Here is the philosophy. For
8 a store, it takes years and years to get a customer, and only
9 five seconds to destroy a customer. What the woman did was
10 she hung up. We found out why. She thought it was a
11 telemarketing call. How do you solve that issue?

12 MS. SALAK: I will start. I think there are two
13 things. First of all, I think that you are in control of your
14 call, and I think that you can -- you can tell the CA what you
15 want them to say. You can say this is a relay call up front, or
16 you can say, hi, I'm a customer, and I have questions about
17 cross-stitching. I think that you are in control of your call.
18 You need to be aware of that, and you need to be aware of it, and
19 do that, if you need to.

20 Second of all, I think there has been an extensive
21 outreach program in Florida that we're continuing to work on, or
22 at least Mr. Forestall is with his group called business
23 partners.

24 And he has been working with trying to sign up
25 companies and have them understand the relay system and

1 understand that that's a customer on the line and not a
2 telemarketer. And that has been a -- they have over 1,000
3 companies signed up at this point in time. And they are making
4 them aware and understanding that that's profits that are going
5 down the drain for them. And they need to be aware of the deaf
6 and hard-of-hearing community.

7 James, I don't know if you wanted to embellish on the
8 business program, or, Greg, if you want to embellish further on
9 the calling. But those are two ideas that come to mind. Either
10 of you?

11 MR. GANTT: Beth, I think, could say more about that
12 issue. Again, yes, the user has the right to say how they want
13 the call announced by the Relay operator. If you don't want them
14 to have to explain the Relay, because some people kind of -- it
15 sounds like a telemarketer call, it does, and they hang up.

16 So you can let the CA know up front, before they call
17 that number, please do not announce it. When you get the person,
18 the business on the line, the first thing you say is: Hello,
19 when you get the business, my name is. And the deaf user can say
20 their name. And that works most of the time. Again, you are in
21 control of your own call.

22 The FTRI has been strongly advertising and contacting
23 businesses on how to use your business through the Relay service.
24 Don't hang up. Train the people at your business. Each business
25 has, you know -- can become Relay friendly. And they are putting

1 posters and things, TV, public service announcements, things like
2 that.

3 So when I hear that kind of thing, I still want to
4 know, I still want to hear it, so that we can change, and our
5 efforts and our program and maybe make changes as well.

6 MR. J. CASEY: I have a question for Mr. Gantt. How does a
7 customer, like my wife, know she has a right to tell the
8 operator?

9 MR. GANTT: That's part of the outreach effort. It
10 seems there's been a heavy emphasis on the rights of the user
11 now. As part of that, we're going forward with now, to let
12 people now with the outreach that you have these rights through
13 the FTRI.

14 MR. J. CASEY: Thank you.

15 MS. SALAK: Mr. Forstall, did you want to say anything?

16 MR. FORSTALL: Good morning. I just wanted to say that
17 if you would give me the name of the business, I will be happy to
18 send them the information.

19 MS. SALAK: And please let your wife know that the call
20 is hers. We want her to enjoy her call and be able to talk to
21 someone and not think that she is a telemarketer. We have heard
22 that complaint before, and we're trying to get the word out that
23 you are in control. Ma'am?

24 MS. YOUNG: My name is Geri Young, and I am the
25 president and founder of Boca Self-help for the

1 Hard-of-Hearing People. I am also on the board of the Deaf
2 Service Center of Palm Beach County. I've been deaf for about
3 20 years, and I've used the Florida Relay ever since 1993.
4 I'm not using it for myself right now, but I used it when I
5 moved down to Florida. I have a very positive thing to say.
6 I used it, and I enjoyed using it. It was sometimes
7 frustrating for people. But for me it was a source of
8 communicating with the world and I loved it.

9 I want you to know that I got a volunteer job in
10 education because of the Florida Relay. And the person on the
11 other end was an assistant principal of a school, and she
12 acted like nothing was unusual. And this was in 1992 -- 1992,
13 actually, that I called this particular school. I had read
14 about it in the paper, and the woman was totally natural about
15 the Relay.

16 When I got down to see her, she told me to come down
17 to see her, she treated me like I was a totally normal person
18 without a disability. I've been telling this story ever
19 since. I was very pleased, and I taught at that school for
20 nine years. I want to say one thing. I have a cochlear
21 implant now, I am one of the lucky ones, and I don't need the
22 Relay any more. And so the only way I have had to use the
23 Relay recently was there is a woman in our chapter -- and by
24 the way, some of the members of my chapter are right here,
25 they are lovely ladies, that are very supportive to all

1 causes. They don't use the Relay, but they're here. But
2 there was one lady that is on the board right now, or two,
3 actually, it was necessary for me to use the relay to contact
4 them.

5 One thing that I noticed that I never noticed before
6 was when I called the Relay to contact this woman, the
7 answering machine was on. And I never remember that in the
8 past. It seemed to me -- now I got very spoiled -- that as
9 soon as a call was made or I made a call, we immediately
10 contacted that person, that we didn't have to go through an
11 answering machine, the Relay answering machine. Can you
12 explain that?

13 MS. SALAK: I can't. So I'm going to hand it over to
14 someone else.

15 MR. PEDROSA: My understanding of your question is
16 basically -- can you hear me?

17 MS. SALAK: Not very well.

18 MR. PEDROSA: Better? Basically if the call goes
19 into the center, the center is busy, it goes into the network,
20 and if the network is busy, sometimes an answering machine
21 will come on saying that all operators are busy, and it will
22 go to the next available operator. That's the only
23 explanation I can think of.

24 MS. SALAK: Was that your experience?

25 MS. YOUNG: My experience was that they said that

1 there is nobody here to take your call right now. Please
2 leave your phone number, and we'll get back to you as soon as
3 we can. And maybe 10 or 15 minutes elapsed before I got that
4 phone call. I'm not saying this is a terrible thing, but I
5 was always under the impression that there was always somebody
6 there to take your call 24 hours a day. And I was thinking,
7 what if it was an emergency? That's what I was thinking. And
8 they did call me back in 10 or 15 minutes, but I had never
9 experienced that when I was the user of Relay.

10 MR. PEDROSA: That sounds like the customer service
11 recording that she reached, not the Sprint Relay or Florida
12 Relay at all.

13 MS. SALAK: Are you sure it was a Sprint answering
14 machine? It sounds almost like it was a customer answering
15 machine or a customer service of the local provider. It almost
16 sounds like it wasn't part of Relay, but some other
17 telecommunications service.

18 MS. YOUNG: It was Relay.

19 MS. SALAK: It was Relay. Okay. We know it was Relay
20 Okay.

21 MS. YOUNG: I have the number, and I was called back,
22 and then we contacted the person. You know, it all worked out.
23 But I'm saying I had to wait like 15 minutes. That's the only
24 thing I have to say.

25 MS. SALAK: No, I appreciate that comment. Obviously

1 we're all stumbling over it. Mr. Wagner had a question.

2 MR. WAGNER: Where did you get the number?

3 MS. YOUNG: Somebody gave me the number. Somebody
4 told me that -- there is two numbers. One for using your cell
5 phone, right, and one for using a regular phone. So I just
6 used the regular phone number. And as I said, I did get the
7 call back, so I know it must have been Relay, the proper phone
8 number. Because then I was in contact with the person. But I
9 had to wait about 10 or 15 minutes. And it happened twice,
10 actually. So I don't know what else to say.

11 MS. SALAK: Okay. You still have us baffled, I can
12 tell. Just one more question. When you say -- you said there
13 was a cell phone number and a separate number, is that what I
14 heard you say?

15 MS. YOUNG: Uh-huh. Isn't there two different numbers?
16 Someone told me 711 for cell. And someone told me another
17 number, a long number for the regular phone, is that correct?

18 MS. SALAK: You can use 711 for any kind of call.

19 MS. YOUNG: So I used the other one.

20 MS. SALAK: Was it an 800 number, the other number?

21 MS. YOUNG: Yes, I think it was.

22 MS. SALAK: It was. Okay. We think you got a blocked
23 call. There are a certain number of calls that are blocked.

24 There is a certain percentage that is allowed, but -- yes.

25 We're going to take a break for about 10 minutes -- 12

1 minutes, actually. At ten till we'll come back to give everybody
2 a break that has been working so hard. Thank you. In 12
3 minutes.

4 (Recess.)

5 MS. SALAK: We thought we would get started again.
6 Chris Wagner is going to tell us about the FAD road tour that is
7 happening, and fill in the details, and tell us what stops he's
8 making.

9 MR. WAGNER: I'm waiting for everybody to sit down.
10 Okay. I'm going to go ahead and present. I wanted to explain
11 about the Florida Association for the Deaf road tour that's new.
12 It's an outreach project. FAD, it's a new board. I decided to
13 do it for myself. I was elected the new president in June, and
14 our new administration was discussing how we're going to outreach
15 to the community because we made a forum of FAD conference, so a
16 lot of the members from the conference expressed concerns. They
17 want more involvement with the FAD, and they also want to know
18 more about the resources of the State of Florida and all the
19 managers --

20 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry?

21 MR. WAGNER: I talked about the members who want to
22 know more about what resources are out there, out in the
23 community, statewide. So my main focus, I decided to make 18
24 cities around the State of Florida. What I'm going to do, I'm
25 going to contact, of course, work with Sprint, with Greg, James

1 at FTRI, the deaf service centers agency, FLASH (phonetic),
2 Self-Help for the Hard-of-Hearing, Florida Registry of
3 Interpreters, it's also, you know, to gather all of them to
4 participate. Also I have been touring around and seeing what
5 they're doing, and also gathering all the important data from the
6 community itself.

7 For example, I started in July in Miami. That was the
8 first one. Why? FAD conference. Many people said: What? It's
9 diversity in our community members. So we're trying to reach an
10 issue. So we decided to go to Miami and go ahead and gather the
11 information, try to find out what we're trying to do and help the
12 community. I'm finding out many of the people -- wow, had a lot
13 of comments, stories, and were not aware about the services. A
14 lot of people in Miami didn't know about the services, about the
15 Relay service. Many people didn't know about the equipment
16 program, many people didn't know a lot about the organization,
17 people didn't know about the rights they have related to the
18 interpreters. There was a lot of issues. It was going on, and
19 on, and on. I was really shocked. It was a packed house, 150
20 people. I was really wow, dumbfounded. A lot of people had
21 emotional comments. So I really decided to collect all the
22 information and the comments and to have it become more public
23 record.

24 What we're doing now is working with Americans with
25 Disabilities Act, working with the group. It's AGOG (phonetic).

1 We agreed that we would collect all the information from July
2 until next June, collect all the information and put it on our
3 record. So all these reports would go to the legislature, to go
4 to the Governor's office, also go to Public Service Commission
5 because of the issues related to what we're talking about today.

6 We have discussed more and more about deaf people to be
7 more involved and express their concerns, and we noticed more
8 people going to our tour because they feel like it's at a
9 community, so we can get into. So we agreed to go ahead with the
10 information, to make it more public, to share with other -- to
11 you and other of the state agencies. Not only PSC, also VR, too.
12 VR also is a big concern, so they expressed their concerns. VR,
13 interpreter issues, ADA accessibility issues. They are really
14 excited about the opportunity we have noticed. We're going to
15 have one in West Palm Beach and tomorrow in Fort Lauderdale. All
16 of those issues will make it possible by support of the
17 organization, like Sprint has donated money to help plan that.
18 FTRI (inaudible) money and support for that. We see that as a
19 strong partnership. We're looking forward to that for many
20 years.

21 I also wanted to encourage other members to speak out.
22 And I understand that many people there -- a couple are writing
23 complaints, we are going to videotape them. We can videotape all
24 their complaints, and then also go right to public comments, plus
25 the ADA log also provides CART. With CART, and also interpreter

1 services, and note comments, and video all included. Wow, that
2 makes a strong testimony for us to look at.

3 So they expect us to receive your reports by next July.

4 Also the videotape to provide. So we are excited about
5 that. It gives the opportunity for deaf people and the
6 hard-of-hearing community to speak out for themselves in their
7 own community.

8 Well, we have concerns about many people don't show up.
9 Like TASA, many people show up from other groups like AGUA
10 (phonetic), the Public Service and people are not showing up.
11 FTA (inaudible) to resolve the solution.

12 A lot of concerns have arisen because of the quality of
13 interpreter services; like deaf service center, the interpreting,
14 if they're certified and licensure issues, job placement and
15 employment issues, education issues, those have popped up often.
16 And also, our report will also help us to focus and to improve
17 our chances of getting a commission for the deaf and hard of
18 hearing in the State of Florida.

19 Any questions?

20 MS. SALAK: You mentioned that you're going to give us
21 the information next July. I understand Sprint will be there, so
22 they'll be able to hear any concerns with Relay or issues, but is
23 it possible for you to -- I mean, as you know, if we don't know
24 about concerns, we can't deal with them. So I know Sprint will
25 know about them, but is there any way you can slowly feed us the

1 information as we go so that we can see what is happening and be
2 in contact that way?

3 MR. WAGNER: Okay. Thanks for asking the question. My
4 purpose for each record to be provided to me and any concerns,
5 I'll send it to you, and then you can give me a report back and I
6 can put it in my report so I can show you what I'm doing and the
7 response. For example, like Relay, we always hear about Spanish
8 Relay issues, you know, merely contact Greg, you know, all the
9 other people so we can contact so you know the concerns are
10 provided to Greg so he will have the response and I can put it in
11 my report. I can show that we're actually not -- we are not just
12 prolonging, we're responding quickly and I can include it in my
13 report.

14 The deaf association, we can contact them and also if
15 they have any complaints, they are an organization, they can
16 respond and I can put it in my report. I think that will be a
17 positive way, approach for us? Any more questions?

18 MS. SALAK: It sounds like a wonderful endeavor that
19 you're undertaking.

20 MR. WAGNER: Thank you. Thank you.

21 BETH: Hello. My name is Beth, and I'm working with the Deaf
22 Service Center of Palm Beach County. My concern is that many
23 of the young people, I'm talking about maybe 19 or 20 years
24 old who came to my office and asked for help or whatever,
25 asked for assistance. The most I was concerned is many of

1 them do not know how to use 711. So I explained to them how
2 to use 711. I was surprised that many of them do not know
3 about it. What can we recommend, how to recruit for young
4 people to use 711? Most of them get a free TTY, FTRI mail to
5 them or sometimes they come to my office to get a TTY. But
6 most of the time many thought they know how to use 711 or
7 Relay service, but they didn't know about it.

8 I thought maybe each different Palm Beach County school
9 the teachers will train them how to use 711, but maybe many
10 hearing teachers with the deaf programs don't know about how
11 to use 711. So what do you think, Chris?

12 MR. WAGNER: I think Sprint really needs to answer that
13 question. But like on the tour, FTRI will be there, and Sprint
14 will be there, so all of them will be there, so all the road
15 tours will be there, they can answer all the questions that come
16 up. But that question, specifically, I think Greg can answer
17 that.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. GANTT: That is a good issue. I feel it's very
20 important for the deaf and hard-of-hearing to be aware and also
21 know how to use it, use the telephone, and also Relay service so
22 as to improve, for like the hearing children talk on the phone,
23 like five or six years old. Like the deaf or hard of hearing
24 using the TTY and be skilled about it. But also, as they grow
25 up, some of the states around have coloring books, it explains

1 and describes how to use a relay for young children. Also, high
2 school. High school, you know, books they could work with FTRI
3 making sure everything is incorporated, and FTRI can -- all kind
4 of materials to different deaf services, agencies, and their
5 local schools, and the deaf and hard of hearing is also included.

6 I would -- go ahead with James.

7 MS. SALAK: Yes, James.

8 MR. FORSTALL: I would just like to add that we have
9 recognized a need for that training for that specific group. And
10 that's why we have created a position, a separate outreach
11 specialist position to focus on the deaf community. And that new
12 person is Fran Burns (phonetic), and she just came on board last
13 week. So she will be focusing on those particular groups and she
14 will be traveling throughout the state and she will be working
15 closely with the other deaf service centers to coordinate those
16 types of trainings.

17 MS. SALAK: So, James, so are the young people, 18,
18 19-year-olds, you're focusing on that group, is that the group
19 you mean? I thought --

20 MR. FORSTALL: We're going to be focusing on all of
21 them. But right now, as our arrangement with the deaf service
22 centers, when they distribute the equipment, they are to be
23 providing that training at the same time. So they're getting
24 exposed to the training on the equipment as well as the relay
25 service. However, we want to reinforce that, and we will be

1 addressing all age groups.

2 MS. SALAK: Under your outreach program, have you found
3 that -- what I heard was that there was actually a difference in
4 the outreach needed for certain groups. I mean, it's obvious for
5 children that they learn differently. But have you found that in
6 the later teens and maybe the young adults that they may need
7 something different also?

8 MR. FORSTALL: Well, to be honest with you, this is the
9 first I'm hearing of that type situation, so we're going to have
10 to go back and address it. But what we want to do is as we find
11 out with the deaf service centers, or whomever, is to let us
12 know, and we'll work to arrange some type of training. But we do
13 not have any materials specifically designed for the education
14 system just yet.

15 MS. SALAK: May I ask generically, is this a common
16 issue that there are some age groups that are not getting the
17 word? Or there's a specific issue with some age groups?

18 MR. KOTTLER: Yes, there's a kids -- particularly in my
19 area. We go to the schools to the deaf classes and talk to them
20 about the phones on loan program, and 711, and really they don't
21 know. A lot of times when we try to give them the phones, the
22 parents will not approve it. So we don't get any further than
23 that until they get past the 18 age, where they don't need
24 parental consent. But, yes, we do go to the schools, but there
25 is no organized program to go do that, other than everybody deals

1 with it differently in their own area, I'm sure. But, yes, that
2 is a group that needs to be contacted some way.

3 MS. SALAK: Okay. Sprint, is that true nationwide that
4 there has to be -- is it a group that is targeted, the young
5 adults, in your other states? Do you know?

6 MR. GANTT: I will provide you an example in Indiana.
7 Like I have a coloring book and I have different information in
8 different languages that can be understood by children. Like to
9 give to school-age children as they're growing up. I distribute
10 all the information to the school in Indiana. And they know they
11 have deaf and hard-of-hearing in their program. Some of them are
12 mainstream and some have programs for the deaf and
13 hard-of-hearing in that school. So it's a variety. And for me
14 to go, I give presentations, lectures, and the curriculum, and I
15 teach them the program, training them, to see how to use it, like
16 a Relay service.

17 MS. SALAK: Chris.

18 MR. WAGNER: I think it's a wonderful idea. I look out
19 for that. Not only to focus on the deaf kids, but also focus on
20 the hearing kids, too. They have to have friends that are
21 calling their friends. I remember when I was growing up, I had
22 nobody call me, so nobody called me. So I think it's important
23 that the deaf program will be better in the future. So that we
24 can look for that. I think that's a great idea if we can share
25 the outreach program and develop that and give them some ideas.

1 MS. SALAK: Jim.

2 MR. PETERSON: I want to add to that comment, with that
3 issue. That the hearing parents doesn't want their deaf children
4 to have equipment. We tell them that FTRI doesn't charge
5 anything, and will give trainings for children to have equipment.
6 And also to train on them. But they are afraid to talk behind
7 their back, or they can't hear, they can't talk on the phone. So
8 the hearing parents think the hearing children talk on the phone.
9 But the parent doesn't realize that the deaf can talk on the TTY.
10 Maybe FTRI can also help creating a program for that, to make
11 their parents nervous or kind of worried -- to be aware of that
12 so they will calm down, so it won't be a problem.

13 MS. SALAK: James.

14 MR. FORSTALL: When we first started out with the
15 outreach campaign, one of the goals was to develop a kit similar
16 to the business partnership kit for the school system. However,
17 we put that on hold because the business partnership kit has
18 really been successful, we want to keep moving and implementing
19 that. But that is on our list of things to do. So we do plan to
20 do something similar through the education field.

21 MS. SALAK: And that will be for the hearing impaired
22 and the hearing community?

23 MR. FORSTALL: It will be for all kids.

24 MS. SALAK: Mr. Casey, you had a question?

25 MR. J. CASEY: My name is Jim Casey, I don't think we'

1 related to Mr. Casey over there.

2 MS. SALAK: It did cross my mind.

3 MR. CASEY: We may be distantly.

4 MR. J. CASEY: I see a group of fine people who put
5 their best foot forward with new ideas. I would like to share
6 one idea I have, because you're talking about people who get
7 TTYs and being trained. What about people way back who
8 already have TTYs, how do you start that issue with the 711?
9 I think if you print these stick-on paper and put it on the
10 TTY, or on the phone, then everyone would know.

11 MR. GANTT: I have a question. If you don't mind, if
12 can add to Chris's comment, also, about the outreach for the
13 schools. Yes, it's very popular to include the hearing friends
14 of the deaf students or hard-of-hearing students that to get
15 together in a group in the school to make their class -- the
16 hearing class, also, to give a presentation. So often we make it
17 fun or amusing. Bring a cell phone to one of the hearing
18 students, and give a deaf or hard-of-hearing a TTY and they will
19 be like really fascinated and it will be very pleasurable to
20 interact that way.

21 MS. SALAK: I don't know if you all heard Mr. Wagner's
22 comment. Your comment was that the stickers are -- you made a
23 comment, and I'm not sure that it got picked up. Your comment
24 was that there are already stickers available for the phone? Is
25 that what you said?

1 MR. WAGNER: I think we have the stickers, the 711
2 stickers, I think so, for the phone, and you can put it on the
3 refrigerator or on the phone. I think we have that.

4 MS. SALAK: James, do you have any of those kind of
5 materials on 711?

6 MR. FORSTALL: I believe that the individual centers
7 had developed those and put those on themselves, am I correct?
8 Because I don't think FTRI ever printed them.

9 MR. WAGNER: I thought you gave them out in the past,
10 the Florida Relay, 711, in the past, you gave them out.

11 MR. FORSTALL: Are you talking about before 711 became
12 official, that white label?

13 MR. KOTTLER: What he's talking about, I know, you know
14 the 711 magnets you give out, I think that's what he's talking
15 about. But that really doesn't explain what 711 is.

16 MR. FORSTALL: It's a magnet.

17 MR. KOTTLER: Yes, a magnet that says dial 711.

18 MR. FORSTALL: Is that what you're referring to? Yes,
19 we do have those.

20 MS. SALAK: But you may want to follow up with
21 Mr. Casey's suggestion about a sticker to put on the machinery.

22 Yes, sir, you had another question?

23 SPEAKER: I'm going to come up and speak.

24 MS. SALAK: As he's coming up, let me just say thank
25 you for all this input. This is excellent. We appreciate the

1 suggestions.

2 JOSE: Hello. My name is Jose. Do you know that
3 there is a new position at outreach, there is a person, one
4 person, you know, all for the whole area of Florida? To give
5 presentations at 1,000 schools? That's a lot. I suggest, you
6 know, four regions for each person. If you have one doing it,
7 it's going to be a lot of work for them.

8 MS. SALAK: I believe that was for you, James, the
9 comment about having one. You have two right now, don't you?
10 James, could you come tell us about your outreach program
11 briefly, and just tell us how many positions you have available
12 for that at this time?

13 MR. FORSTALL: Right now we have two full-time outreach
14 specialists, and we have a position for the outreach manager, and
15 we have an outreach secretary. That's what we have right now.

16 And the program we have in place, we also have
17 contracts with all the deaf service centers and training agencies
18 throughout the state to do outreach in their areas. So it's not
19 just the FTRI headquarters office doing all the outreach. We
20 have the contractors out there doing it, as well.

21 Right now, with John Gray our outreach specialist who
22 travels and does presentations when we get contacts in our
23 office, if we get a call from a center of a request in Miami, we
24 will refer it back to the Miami Center. We've always done that.
25 And John is focusing mostly on the areas that are not -- that do

1 not have a deaf service center or contract with FTRI. And Fran
2 will be focusing on the deaf community, the grassroots to get out
3 and re-educate them, create their awareness on how to use the
4 Relay as well as train on how to use the equipment.

5 MS. SALAK: James, do you currently now have separate
6 outreach contracts with the regional distribution centers?

7 MR. FORSTALL: Yes, we do.

8 MS. SALAK: And under that contract they go out and
9 they do outreach?

10 MR. FORSTALL: Uh-huh.

11 MS. SALAK: Any more questions on this part? Any more
12 questions on outreach? Your comments have been excellent. Thank
13 you.

14 If there are no questions on this part, we'll move on.
15 Maggie Scholar from Sprint was going to give us an update and
16 tell us how the CapTel trial is going in Florida. And, Maggie,
17 if you don't mind, just in case someone in the audience may not
18 know what CapTel is, could you give a brief overview of what
19 CapTel is? Thank you.

20 MS. SCHOLAR: Yes. CapTel. How many people here in
21 the audience have a CapTel phone? Okay. You don't have yours
22 yet?

23 MR. WAGNER: Since then I haven't gotten one.

24 MS. SCHOLAR: Have you mailed in your paperwork?

25 MR. WAGNER: I sent it about a year ago.

1 MS. SCHOOLAR: Okay. We'll look into it. One of the
2 things we have is people will sign up, and then we send them
3 their paperwork, and then we don't get the paperwork back, so --

4 But CapTel is really a remarkable new form of Relay.
5 It's completely separate from the TRS that people have been using
6 for years. What it does is it utilizes a voice-to-text
7 technology. It takes two different elements to use to make
8 CapTel work. You have to have a specific CapTel phone, and then
9 you also have to have CapTel agents. CapTel agents are not Relay
10 agents in the traditional sense. They are agents who are trained
11 to revoice. Everything that they hear they can revoice at a rate
12 of about 160 words a minute. Our average is 145. Our accuracy
13 rate is 98 percent.

14 So for a person who uses CapTel, they get the closest
15 to normal call conversation as possible. In order to use CapTel,
16 you have to be able to voice for yourself. And so what we have
17 is elderly people who have lost their hearing who used to use
18 their phone, and now they can use it again with CapTel. And we
19 have our VCO clientele. Those are the user groups who find
20 success using CapTel.

21 In Florida, specifically, we have a trial that began in
22 June, and will continue through February. We, today, have 144
23 participants. We have a list of people who we are still waiting
24 to get their paperwork back so we can send their phones to, and
25 Greg has been following up with those people. Our goal is to hit

1 200 participants as quickly as possible.

2 The average minutes for each CapTel user in Florida is
3 117. This is really high, especially at the beginning. We are
4 seeing in our other trials -- and we do have nine other trials, I
5 have a slide later to show you what is going on nationwide with
6 CapTel. A typical user will start with about 60 to 65 minutes a
7 month. In Florida you immediately started at over 100 minutes a
8 month. So it's going to be really interesting to see over time
9 just how high the Florida minutes go. That's our highest rate of
10 any of our states right now. Oregon over time has a really high
11 rate, but they're not hitting that Florida at the beginning. So
12 it's very interesting. The total minutes you can see there,
13 13,000, almost 14,000 minutes we processed in August.

14 Because this is a trial, each user fills out a packet
15 of information and sends back to feedback on each of their calls
16 and how they feel about the service. So we're able to really
17 quantify user satisfaction. You can see our satisfaction for
18 sound quality in Florida for the first three months has been 78
19 percent, and an 82 percent satisfaction overall. We found with
20 our other trials that the first three months the satisfaction
21 overall is lower than it is after the fourth month. So this is
22 your fourth month, actually, so it will be interesting to see
23 what your results are like for September.

24 What CapTel brings is it's faster than Relay, it's much
25 more simple to use, and the user has complete caller control. I

1 don't like this first bullet point, because they're talking about
2 older people using Relay, and I don't appreciate older being
3 classified as over 41. I think they could have made that bar a
4 little bit higher there, you know. But 75 percent of our users
5 are over 41 years old; 33 percent are over 60. We have, I
6 believe the last time I saw, about 300 people who are over 90.
7 And that's nationwide using the service.

8 After four months of service, the satisfaction raises
9 up to a 90 to a 96 percent satisfaction rate for our users.
10 There is no agent interaction on a CapTel call. So all the
11 different rules that we have in place for relay, with pacing, and
12 explaining, and announcing service, and giving caller control
13 back to the user, none of those things apply with CapTel. The
14 agent is completely transparent. The agent never speaks to the
15 voice person, the agent never interacts with either party. They
16 simply voice everything they hear, and that's it.

17 CapTel is 44 percent faster than traditional VCO. And
18 so what they've done is taken VCO scripts, and they've run all
19 these calls on VCO, how long it takes to do the exact same call.
20 They do it on CapTel, it's 44 percent faster.

21 And anyone who has seen CapTel or uses CapTel knows
22 that for a fact. I mean, you can look at Relay with a 60 words
23 per minute, and you look at CapTel where we're transmitting at an
24 average of 140, 145 words a minute. So the speed is phenomenal.

25 64 percent of CapTel users have never used Relay

1 before. This is an amazing number. This means that the group
2 that is coming in to use Relay, the traditional Relay service has
3 not been accessible to them. They have not used it in the past.
4 We also think this is one of the reasons that the satisfaction
5 rate is a little low at the beginning of the trial, because we
6 have people coming in and using CapTel who have never used Relay,
7 who haven't used the phone, some people, in 20 or 30 years.

8 So there is an awkwardness about it in figuring out how
9 it all works. And once they get it all figured out, then that
10 satisfaction rate soars.

11 I wanted to talk to you a little bit about the
12 relationship between Sprint and Ultratec. What we have is Sprint
13 and Ultratec have a master service agreement. Ultratec designed
14 and developed not only the CapTel phone, but the CapTel service.
15 Sprint has an agreement with Ultratec that we will provide the
16 service. They can also make agreements with other providers to
17 provide the service. But we have an agreement with them
18 ourselves.

19 We offer the CapTel service to all Sprint states. And
20 the states have to contract through Sprint in order to get the
21 service, you can't go directly to Ultratec, you come to us and we
22 provide it. Ultratec provides the phones. And, for instance, in
23 Florida, they would go through James' organization to distribute
24 the phones.

25 And the phones are a separate piece of it. You have to

1 have the phone to use service, but the two -- so they are
2 connected, but they're actually purchased separately. Currently,
3 Ultratec manages a CapTel center in Madison, Wisconsin. It
4 handles all of the CapTel traffic for the nation right now. We
5 have about 85 agents, and they have the ability to grow to about
6 220. In 2004, Sprint will begin opening our CapTel centers. And
7 we're talking with different states and finding out which states
8 would be interested in having CapTel centers.

9 CapTel is about to explode. At the moment the
10 trials -- we're able to handle all the traffic in that one
11 center, and we expect that to go on until about sometime in the
12 first quarter, the end of the first quarter, and then we are
13 going to have to start bringing up centers, and Sprint will
14 manage those centers.

15 This is a messy slide. I was trying to get all the
16 activity that is currently going on so you guys would have an
17 idea how big CapTel is. I've been out of the country, actually,
18 for a couple weeks, and I had to add Wyoming in there last night,
19 because I realized that we're working with them, too. So this is
20 a really fluid document here. The Federal Relay Service, we are
21 currently providing a trial. They have required CapTel in their
22 RFP their service will begin in January. So whoever their relay
23 provider is when they select them with our new RFP are required
24 to provide CapTel. Washington has a trial going on and we're
25 currently discussing offering them a contract when their trial is

1 up. And their trial is up at the end of November. Oregon, their
2 trial is up at the end of this year, January 1st. They just, I
3 found out, signed a contract with us for CapTel that will extend
4 until their next RFP, which is, I think, the end of 2004 and then
5 they will require CapTel in their next RFP.

6 Illinois we have a trial, they will be -- we don't have
7 a signed contract but we have a negotiated contract with
8 Illinois. Their service will start on January 1st. Missouri
9 required it in the RFP, we have a three-year contract with
10 Missouri. California has a trial. We are discussing the terms.
11 Minnesota does not have a trial, but is working with us to roll
12 CapTel on January 1st. Florida of course we have a trial here,
13 and we will be discussing the possible future of CapTel.

14 Hawaii has a three-year contract. Colorado, we do not
15 have a signed contract, but we have an agreed contract that we'll
16 start service on January 1st. Vermont, we're still discussing
17 when they will start. Texas, our GNI will be going to present
18 the CapTel contract to the Texas PUC next week. And in North
19 Carolina it is in the RFP. In Wisconsin it was required in the
20 RFP. And Wisconsin is about to actually announce who their
21 provider is going to be. I've been sweating that one. So
22 whoever they select will be offering CapTel in Wisconsin.

23 Montana, they did not have a trial, but we are
24 discussing their contract, and the same thing with Wyoming. We
25 actually have 20 states right now that we're talking with. So I

1 don't have them all listed. Like I said, I've been gone for a
2 couple weeks and states are lining up. Why all of these states
3 are coming to us at this moment in time is all of the users from
4 across the country, and the AARP, and the pressure to have this
5 service. And the FCC just came out and made -- allowed CapTel to
6 be a relay feature. That means it's fully reimbursable by the
7 fund. And it is not required for states to provide, but if a
8 state provides it, they can provide it under a TRS contract as a
9 feature of TRS. And the interstate fund will reimburse for all
10 interstate minutes.

11 So what has happened so far?

12 All of our Sprint CapTel trials are generating 180,000
13 minutes a month. We have over 1,400 users. We will have a fully
14 FCC-compliant product that will be available on January 1, 2004.
15 FCC has ruled that CapTel is a type of TRS. And they gave the
16 following waivers. I thought it would be interesting for you
17 guys to see it. These are the things that are not required for
18 CapTel. You don't have to have 711 dialing access. The reason
19 being you don't have to dial relay when you use CapTel. You just
20 dial the person you're calling, and the phone automatically
21 routes you to CapTel. So there is no reason to have 711, except
22 for the voice person who is calling to the CapTel person. They
23 still have to dial an 800 number to get to the CapTel service.

24 But the FCC has granted a waiver, and I believe it's a
25 two-year waiver to allow Ultratec and providers the ability to

1 change that. What they're actually working on right now is the
2 ability for the voice person just to dial the person's number
3 directly and have that route. And so it's something that we have
4 been working on in relay for many years, but with SS7 technology
5 coming up, that may happen before we're required to use 711.

6 Typing is, of course, waived. CA requirements such as
7 accuracy in spelling are waived. Because the CA does not type,
8 they don't spell, they just simply revoice what is being said.
9 There are a lot of those requirements that don't apply. You
10 don't have any sequential calling on CapTel, because when your
11 call is over there is no one to tell to dial. You use that phone
12 just like you use a regular phone. When your call is over, you
13 hang up and you call the next person.

14 And so that requirement to stay online and process
15 different calls is not something that works with CapTel. No
16 gender preference. No one hears the agent. There is no reason
17 for a gender preference.

18 The interruptibility, that is the ability -- what is
19 that the ability to? That's not for the agent to interrupt --
20 that is for the agent to interrupt. For pacing, to get in there
21 and slow down the person, and stop them. Is that it? I knew I
22 was going to get confused on that one.

23 MR. GANTT: I want to interrupt for a moment. The
24 interruptible possibility is for those using TTY with Turbo Code
25 features. This feature gives the caller the ability to interrupt

1 in the middle of a conversation. Also like a traditional TTY.
2 You know, you try to interrupt the other person, and you can't.
3 You know, it will keep on typing away. If you interrupt the
4 feature -- this is for the Turbo Code, this will be able to do
5 that.

6 For many states who don't have the equipment for that,
7 the distribution program will help a lot with the equipment, with
8 TC, you know, Turbo Code. So that's what interruptibility is.

9 MS. SCHOOLAR: And the call release is something that
10 the FCC is now mandating, and that is that relay providers be
11 able to drop off the call. So if a TTY person is calling and
12 wants to speak to a TTY person, the agent can drop off, and it
13 can connect up. And that is something that is going to be
14 required later on this year, that's not something that they're
15 requiring for CapTel. They are waiving the ASCII and Baudot.
16 They're waiving speech-to-speech and HCO, they just don't apply
17 to CapTel.

18 The things that we'll be adding and changing to CapTel,
19 different from what you're seeing right now in your trial is, you
20 know, all CapTel long distance is free, because we didn't have
21 all the carrier of choice issues resolved before the trial. So
22 anyone who wants to make a long distance call, we just process it
23 for free. Once the product rolls, people will have the same
24 ability to access their carrier of choice that they do with their
25 telephone now. We will be available 24/7, there will be no call

1 restrictions, 900, international, all of that will work. We will
2 follow all speed of answer and service level requirements
3 currently applied to TRS. We will provide Spanish language
4 captioning and 911 access. So those things will be all turned on
5 on January 1st.

6 We have books of comments about CapTel right now.
7 These are two of my favorite. The first one on there, this woman
8 gave this comment the day she got her phone. And she was just so
9 excited. The second one, CapTel has changed my life. It's not
10 very often you have an opportunity to change people's lives with
11 something. And I see it all the time going and showing CapTel to
12 different user groups, and people are crying when they see it.
13 They really want the service. It's so different from Relay, and
14 really opens up people's lives. It's amazing.

15 Questions?

16 MS. SALAK: Go ahead, Chris. You had a comment?

17 MR. WAGNER: I have a few questions. What you just
18 said about hope to see the changes to include our RFP next year
19 for the service contract, would it be separate or hope to be
20 included with TRS contract next year or RFP? Which one, is that
21 what you said in Florida?

22 MS. SCHOOLAR: What we would like to do in Florida is
23 have you start your CapTel contract at the end of your trial and
24 have that run until your RFP, until your next contract.

25 MS. SALAK: But I can -- the contract is up May of

1 2005. And we are going to have to start the RFP process soon.
2 We're probably going to start the beginning of the year getting
3 the RFP together and approved and working on it.

4 So that lucky experience is all coming. And, as you
5 know, the board has been involved in that in the past, this
6 group. I believe last time Jerry Connor was in the thick of it
7 and reviewed everything, so I hear. I wasn't involved in it, but
8 that's what I hear. Rick was involved. Rick, do you have some
9 comments?

10 MR. KOTTLER: I have two questions. First of all, you
11 quote a user minute that you're using, an average user minute for
12 CapTel, how does that compare against current VCO users? Do you
13 know that number?

14 MS. SCHOOLAR: The current VCO call is 5.75 minutes, an
15 average length of call. And an average CapTel length of call, I
16 believe, is 3.25.

17 MR. KOTTLER: No, no, I'm talking about -- I need to
18 rephrase that.

19 MS. SALAK: The 117 number that she presented, that
20 number?

21 MR. KOTTLER: Yes. The average that they're using,
22 what I'm trying to figure out is are the people with CapTel using
23 that more than the current people who have the VCOs?

24 MS. SCHOOLAR: Oh, yes. Very much so. It's a little
25 more difficult to say average length -- I mean, how many minutes

1 a TRS user uses, because no one tracks that. We have a specific
2 tracking on CapTel. But for TRS, people typically only make four
3 calls a month. With CapTel, people are using the phone more in
4 line with how a hearing person uses the phone. And that's
5 staying on the call for, you know, an hour at a time.

6 So we're looking at average minutes per user of over
7 100 minutes a month, which is unheard of in relay, standard
8 relay.

9 MR. KOTTLER: So you're looking to replace the current
10 VCO system with CapTel?

11 MS. SCHOOLAR: Absolutely.

12 MR. KOTTLER: So we're talking about junking all the
13 phones that we have out there and redistributing -- this is a
14 major expense, I would think.

15 MS. SCHOOLAR: Or replacing them over time, probably,
16 is what other states are talking about. As many different names
17 of states that you saw up there, we have as many different issues
18 with equipment distribution programs and how it's going to roll
19 and how it's going to fit. But it's not something that we can,
20 on January 1st, give 5,000 phones to a state and have them
21 replace everything. It would be a graduated process that would
22 happen over time.

23 MR. KOTTLER: How long?

24 MS. SCHOOLAR: For as long as the contract would be.
25 Like in Texas, for example, people have equipment out

1 there, and they are eligible to get equipment, I think, every
2 seven years. So if somebody has already got equipment, they are
3 going to wait seven years to get their next one. In other states
4 they don't have equipment distribution programs, so people are
5 just going to have to buy CapTel. So how Florida decides to work
6 that, that would be something that we'll have to work out with
7 James and with you guys.

8 MS. SALAK: To follow up on that, Ultratec only has one
9 center right now, right, and they are starting other centers. So
10 there is only so much traffic that they can take care of right
11 now. So not only do the states need to work up to it, but I
12 think Ultratec is in the same boat.

13 MS. SCHOOLAR: And actually Sprint is in the same boat
14 because we will take over the centers as soon as that Madison
15 Center gets full. And so we will start bringing up CapTel
16 centers this year to handle the traffic.

17 MS. SALAK: And those will be Sprint people manning
18 them?

19 MS. SCHOOLAR: We haven't decided that yet. That
20 hasn't been decided whether or not they will be Sprint centers,
21 or whether it will be subcontracted centers to our current
22 subcontractor, or new subcontractors. That just hasn't been
23 determined yet.

24 MS. SALAK: But is the decision between subcontracting
25 or is the decision between Ultratec versus Sprint?

1 MS. SCHOOLAR: Sprint and subcontracting. Ultratec is
2 not in the service industry. They only wanted to launch the
3 product and make sure that their technology and their vision of
4 how it was going to work was within their control. And now that
5 the trials are over, they are not interested in continuing. They
6 will keep one center as a test bed, but they are interested in
7 having others provide the service and they will continue to
8 provide the equipment. They are an equipment manufacturing
9 company, and so they don't want to be in the service industry.
10 So we'll have the centers, and we'll either subcontract them out
11 to PRC, or CSD, or one of our subcontractors, or we'll manage
12 them and they will be Sprint centers.

13 MS. SALAK: Just to follow up on a question that was
14 asked earlier about confidentiality. All the confidentiality
15 rules will still apply to the CapTel system, right?

16 MS. SCHOOLAR: Absolutely. If I didn't mention it
17 here, then it is already happening with CapTel, as far as all FCC
18 requirements.

19 MS. SALAK: And so to follow up on the concern that was
20 expressed earlier, how would a person know -- since the CA or the
21 agent is quiet through the whole thing, and you don't know that
22 they are there, how would a person know that that was a CapTel
23 call?

24 MS. SCHOOLAR: Many times the hearing person never
25 knows it was a CapTel call. And it's one of the things that our

1 users love the most about the service, is they can use the phone
2 and no one knows that they're deaf. And so it is never announced
3 unless the person making the call tells them. And the person
4 making the call, you know, everything that's heard comes across
5 the screen, and they do get the CA number. So if there's a
6 problem, and the problem may be with captioning, you know, it's
7 not clear, or they had a problem on the line. They have the CA
8 number, so they can call Ultratec with that information, but they
9 can't interact with the CA. And so they know it's a CapTel call,
10 but there is also no phrase that we say that we're monitoring or
11 anything like that.

12 And we do monitor on CapTel calls, also.

13 MR. WAGNER: I really appreciate your comment that you
14 make about CapTel. If you can answer the other question I have.
15 CapTel is wonderful for people who can speak and who can -- that
16 are hard of hearing. I know the trial from the process, my
17 concern is people who are profoundly deaf will be there in the
18 future or will Voice Carry Over be part of the system? I don't
19 think so. CapTel will leave FRS into that relay service itself.
20 Right now it's time limited, you know, for that time frame as a
21 provider. So my understanding is it's limited time. So
22 providing free, for them on the Internet. So are there plans to
23 being incorporated FRS so it can be represented to the deaf
24 community that can use that. FRS and also CapTel is one of them,
25 is one of the options to be included into the contract in the

1 future? VRS and also the Internet relay in the future will they
2 be incorporated in the contract? I'm wondering, what are your
3 plans? I'm just curious.

4 MS. SCHOOLAR: Now, the Internet relay, the FCC has
5 waived the Internet relay being rolled to the states for five
6 years. So states don't have to worry about absorbing the cost of
7 Internet relay for another five years. The reason behind that is
8 that you can't accurately say where the call is coming from right
9 now, so they can't charge the states.

10 The same thing is happening with VRS. You know, you
11 have the same situation, but they have not granted a five-year
12 waiver for VRS. Based on a presentation I just saw at NAZRA
13 (phonetic), they say that they have no immediate plans to roll
14 VRS back to the states. But I am seeing on many of the new RFPs
15 that are coming out, the states are requiring a VRS and an
16 Internet price. So that if it rolls back during the term of the
17 contract, they already have a price set. So that's a good idea.
18 CapTel is another option that would be in an RFP. Was that your
19 question? There are so many different new things right now. But
20 one thing I wanted to say real quick is standard TRS, CapTel
21 technology is the standard of our standard TRS, also. So our
22 deaf consumer who is using TRS and doesn't have access to video,
23 and doesn't have access to the Internet, and they are just using
24 their TTY, they are going to be benefiting from this technology,
25 because Sprint is going to roll it onto our regular platform and

1 will be using voice-to-text technology and speed it up. So it is
2 really going to be a remarkable time for everybody. And we are
3 hoping to have that happen within the next couple of years.

4 MS. SALAK: Can I just follow up on Chris's question.
5 Those services that you're talking about, it would have to be
6 decided whether to put them in the RFP or not when we go out for
7 bid with other providers as well as Sprint.

8 MR. WAGNER: What I was confused about, two years ago,
9 there was two years left with VRS and Internet relay, about two
10 years left. So with the finances, I don't know (inaudible) if
11 it's two years. So the issue is if the program is dropped so we
12 have no VRS or Internet relay? That was sharing for about two
13 years, when it first started. So I said that's two years, that's
14 it? I said, oh, oh, so what is going to happen after two years?
15 What will happen with that program? That's what we have heard.
16 So after two years, what happens? They never answered the
17 question.

18 So I remember discussing that at the TASA meeting in
19 the past, maybe last year, or maybe when Ken threw the idea out
20 that Internet relay or VRS for two years, you will still have
21 the funding for that. For two years it will be free, then after
22 that we will discuss that. But I was a little puzzled about
23 that, so I want to know how many years are left. Who is
24 responsible for that, for VRS and the Internet relay? Do you
25 remember that question, remember in the past?

1 MS. SALAK: I can tell you right now, if I remember
2 right, that the contract right now covers that Internet will be
3 provided until the end of the contract. But video is not
4 included as part of the contract. That they were going to
5 provide it and then get the federal funding. So Internet will be
6 provided under the end, but VRS is --

7 MR. WAGNER: I'm talking about their funding. How it
8 runs out in two years. That's the question.

9 MS. SALAK: Their funding that is coming from the
10 federal side?

11 MR. WAGNER: Yes, correct, from the federal side.

12 MS. SCHOOLAR: I just saw a presentation by the FCC and
13 NECA, and they were discussing that, and there is no problem with
14 their fund. They were talking about how even though it's
15 billions of dollars, it's just a drop in the bucket. And that
16 they're not going to have any problems covering this. This was
17 an issue, also. But they will cover all funding for Internet for
18 five years. VRS, there is no guarantee. They could pull the
19 plug in January. You know, we don't know what they're going to
20 do with VRS. They very much made it sound like they are going to
21 continue funding VRS until some date in the future and they just
22 didn't give us a date in the future. But it's a concern with
23 many, many states, because their users are becoming addicted to
24 video relay. And what is going to happen if all of a sudden the
25 feds day, "We're not paying for it anymore." The states are

1 going to have to be scrambling, or not provided, you know, or
2 what would happen. But that is a concern nationwide, I can let
3 you know. There is no time line. And the FCC would not even
4 hazard a guess. They told people, "Don't worry about it," but
5 they didn't give any kind of time line.

6 MS. SALAK: Rick.

7 MR. KOTTLER: Just a quick question. Is Ultratec the
8 only manufacturer?

9 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes. Ultratec designed and developed
10 the CapTel phone and the CapTel service. At this current time
11 there is no one else providing anything like it.

12 MS. SALAK: Do you know if there is someone out there
13 developing it?

14 MS. SCHOOLAR: Not that I've heard.

15 MR. CASEY: You had mentioned that Sprint is going to
16 take over these centers in 2004. Is there going to be a center
17 in each of the Sprint states?

18 MS. SCHOOLAR: We will be putting centers into states
19 who are interested in having a center in their state. Eventually
20 we expect that we will have many, many centers. Initially, we
21 will just have enough to hit capacity. We have had several
22 states already approach us saying, "I want a center in my state."
23 And so as we talk about the contract, we're discussing that. If
24 a state wants a center or not, you know, if they want to provide
25 those jobs or not.

1 MR. CASEY: Has there been any dialogue about Florida?

2 MS. SCHOOLAR: We will be talking to you guys this
3 afternoon.

4 And how we're rolling CapTel into different states is
5 offering X number of phones a month. Because, as Rick brought
6 up, the minutes of use are so high that in order for states to be
7 able to control their budget, in order for us to be able to
8 control the service the way we do it is by the distribution of
9 the phones. So we have states that are rolling 25 phones a
10 month, we have states that are rolling 50 phones a month, and we
11 have states that are rolling 100 phones a month. And we have one
12 state that wants to roll, I think, seven phones a month. But
13 that's how states are doing it. They're trying to get into it
14 gradually, but they want to offer it.

15 One of the things that Wisconsin required in their RFP
16 was pricing that would go from if they rolled five phones a month
17 to unlimited. And so they wanted to see what we expected the
18 price every month to be for that.

19 MS. SALAK: Does anyone -- I'm sorry, Jim.

20 MR. PETERSON: I understand that CapTel users can use
21 the phone up til 10:00 o'clock in the evening? That's a question
22 I'm asking.

23 MS. SCHOOLAR: Well, we expanded the hours to midnight
24 I believe. Is that right? Greg, do you all know that?

25 MR. WAGNER: Yeah, yeah.

1 MS. SCHOOLAR: I believe it's midnight. It's central
2 time, but I think you all have it till midnight.

3 MR. PETERSON: I had one client approach me who had a
4 complaint about the time because I have two different phones in
5 my house. I have a CapTel that I use up to 10:00 o'clock in the
6 evening, and I have the other phone I use, so I have to go back
7 to the voice carryover through the relay. It seems like people
8 who like CapTel have limited time. So I was just curious about
9 that.

10 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes, during the trial status, we did
11 have limited hours, and we still do. Once the product goes full
12 on January 1st, it will be available 24 hours a day. It won't be
13 available in Florida 24 hours a day until you roll it as a
14 contract. So while your trial is in effect you have the trial
15 conditions, and then once the product goes full, those other
16 things are added.

17 MS. SALAK: James?

18 MR. FORSTALL: Maggie, I don't know if you talked about
19 this, but maybe you have. The Florida Relay average minutes is
20 117, is that what it is a month? Can you tell us why that's
21 higher than other states?

22 MS. SCHOOLAR: We don't know why. You know, we do
23 know in other states when we roll the service in the beginning
24 people are a little tentative about using it, and their minutes
25 just aren't as high, and then it grows over time. You just came

1 in high, so your users just came in talking. And it will just be
2 interesting to see whether they cap out right there or it
3 continues to grow. We don't know why.

4 MR. FORSTALL: The other question I have is concerning
5 the equipment. In Florida we don't have a limitation on the
6 number of equipment we distribute, and we were wondering if that
7 might be a problem for us. Because if you put a limit on how
8 many we could distribute, then we're going to have a lot of
9 people calling me up asking me why. And I don't want to have to
10 be the one to tell them no. So if you can answer that question,
11 that will be fine.

12 MS. SCHOOLAR: Exactly. Barbara Dreyfus from Ultratec
13 she is the one who will be coordinating all the contracts for the
14 equipment. And for some states, she is going to be managing the
15 waiting list herself, because the states don't want to hear it.
16 So the states that have decided they are going to do 25 or 50
17 phones a month, very limited, and know they will have a waiting
18 list, they are having Ultratec send out letters saying the phone
19 is being held, or the anticipated date that their phone will be
20 available. But for a large state like Florida or Texas, yeah, it
21 will be interesting to see.

22 MR. FORSTALL: So will it be just a matter of time
23 before the call centers get to the level where you can handle the
24 volume of calls, you know, to allow them to distribute that many
25 more phones?

1 MS. SCHOOLAR: Exactly. That and states evaluating
2 their budget to see how many providers they can allow. How many
3 providers they can offer it to. So we are offering pretty short
4 contracts. We have a couple of three-year contracts out there,
5 but most states are wanting to go with one or two years, and they
6 are wanting to just see what is happening initially and see how
7 it all works. But we are developing it with equipment
8 distribution programs all over the country, trying to resolve all
9 of those issues.

10 MR. WAGNER: I have a question. If you do send a call
11 center here in Florida, will you just decide to go to PRC, or
12 Miami, or will it be separate?

13 MS. SCHOOLAR: There have been no decisions. That
14 would be something we would discuss with the Commission. Do you
15 guys want a center? Where do you want a center? Do you have an
16 area of low employment where you would like a center? Is there a
17 place that -- you know, are you interested in it? Some states
18 don't want, some states do. So that's something we would
19 discuss.

20 MR. WAGNER: They're not going to only have the
21 clientele with operators already in TRS, also it would be a
22 contract, so it can be the same or it can be different?

23 MS. SCHOOLAR: Our new next generation platform is
24 fully CapTel capable, so we have the flexibility of putting
25 CapTel into our centers. And like I was saying earlier, the

1 CapTel technology will be incorporated in our centers in the
2 future.

3 But initially what we're discussing is establishing
4 separate CapTel centers only. The CapTel agent base is different
5 than the TRS agent base. We're finding we need to have a higher
6 educated group of people because of the vocabulary, and the
7 diction, and getting the accuracy of the terminology for the
8 voice-to-text technology. We're finding that college students
9 are our best resource right now. And so to intermingle our
10 relay, the standard TRS workforce with the CapTel workforce at
11 this time isn't something we want to do. So I think we're going
12 to keep them separate at least for the first year or two until
13 the technology is merged.

14 MR. KOTTLER: I want to just make a comment that this
15 is going to be a nightmare for the RDCs. And the reason is right
16 now when, say Ameriphone is slow on shipping a delivery of phones
17 to us and we have got to call these people up and say, no, we
18 can't give it to you today, you're going to have to wait three
19 days, and we get a ration of grief for you're going to make me
20 wait three days for this phone, and now we're going to talk to
21 people and tell them you're going to be on this list for six
22 months to a year before -- and James isn't going to hear it,
23 we're going to be hearing it all day long. That's something that
24 is going to have to be taken into consideration if we go to this,
25 because that's just going to be brutal.

1 MS. SALAK: I saw a couple of hands go up in the
2 audience of people that are using CapTel. Would anybody like to
3 comment on how it's working for them?

4 MS. KIM SMITH: Hello. My name is Kim Smith. I tried
5 to use it once, but it didn't work very well for me. I'm
6 profound deaf. But my father-in-law, who uses that device,
7 fell in love with it. He's also hard of hearing, and refuses
8 to use VCO. It's very complicated for him. It's very
9 complicated. He doesn't want to go through relay service,
10 either, he doesn't like that either. Until I introduced him
11 to -- for the trial basis, I can communicate with him through
12 video relay because the interpreter can speak clearly for that
13 captioning.

14 I was able to carry on a conversation. It was a really
15 wonderful tool for my father-in-law. He really loves that.
16 My mother-in-law, too, loves it. They use it all the time.
17 They use it so much to communicate better. So it's a definite
18 tool for the hard of hearing, and for certain people with
19 hearing loss. I think it's very positive, too.

20 MS. SALAK: Thank you. Did you want to speak, Beth?

21 BETH: I really love CapTel very much. I use them a lot.
22 But the biggest problem I have now is that when someone calls
23 me, I want to answer the phone, but I don't want to because of
24 no print. So I have to run to my other room, check the ID
25 caller. If it's someone strange, I won't answer the phone.

1 So hopefully some day you can connect with --

2 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes.

3 BETH: And also, interpreter video is wonderful.
4 But my mother prefers to hear my voice instead of using video
5 interpreter. Thank you.

6 MS. SALAK: Mr. Casey, you have a comment?

7 MR. J. CASEY: A little while ago you spoke about the
8 issue of confidentiality. When I look at your list of
9 statistics, it blew me away when you mentioned the age of each
10 participant. I thought where is that confidentiality?

11 MS. SCHOOLAR: And that's what is nice about having a
12 trial, because each participant gave us all their demographics
13 and they give us feedback every month. And so we have access to
14 all of that information right now. And they have also signed
15 forms saying that we can release their information as part of our
16 trial. Once this becomes a product, there will be no statistics
17 like that, unless users want to give them to us.

18 MR. WAGNER: The comment about my wife got the CapTel.
19 We both tried it. We do realize like with Kim, it doesn't relate
20 to us, we are profoundly deaf. Because we can't tell a person to
21 hold on, then we can finish the con -- then we can't speak. But
22 again, if you plan to, you know, use that service with CapTel,
23 will you include caller ID? Because right now, when a person
24 calls, it says, you know, Wisconsin on it, Madison, Wisconsin.
25 So will caller ID be included in that, with the CapTel?

1 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes, caller ID will be included. This
2 service will be rolled on the Sprint platform, and once it gets
3 there you will have caller ID. I don't know if we will have
4 caller ID on January 1st, though, that is a good question. I
5 know we're working on it and it is possible, but I'm not sure if
6 it will be ready on that day or not.

7 MS. SALAK: And I think, Rick, back to your comment
8 about it will be a nightmare for you, I think that those
9 considerations, along with the cost of CapTel, along with the
10 consumer desire to have it and the love of it, I think all of
11 that has to be taken into account before we contract for it. So
12 we recognize that there will be an equipment problem.

13 MR. KOTTLER: I'm sitting here starting to worry.

14 MS. SALAK: Believe me, your worries are my worries. I
15 understand. That has been an issue from the beginning. Of
16 course, what we're talking about is equipment that is distributed
17 free to the customer. I'm assuming that if someone wanted to buy
18 it tomorrow, they could buy the equipment themselves on the open
19 market, or no?

20 MS. SCHOOLAR: No. Because someone has to pay for the
21 minutes, the state has to authorize the service, and the state
22 has to authorize the sale of the phones.

23 MS. SALAK: All sales?

24 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes.

25 MS. SALAK: I mean, it's not like other pieces of

1 equipment?

2 MS. SCHOOLAR: No. Like a state that as an
3 income-based equipment distribution program, what they're doing
4 is they will have 50 phones a month that they can distribute. So
5 many will go through their equipment and so many will be able to
6 buy themselves. So they will let people buy it themselves, but
7 no one can buy it directly from Ultratec without the state's
8 permission.

9 MS. SALAK: I see.

10 MS. SCHOOLAR: And if a person leaves the state and has
11 the phone, the phone will automatically not work somewhere else.
12 So they can't take the phone someplace else, because there will
13 be nobody to pay for those minutes.

14 MS. SALAK: Okay. But, you're right, there are a lot
15 of issues still out there on CapTel, obviously. Any other
16 questions for Maggie? All right.

17 That's the end of the scheduled agenda. As you are
18 aware, we're going to be here this afternoon at 1:30 to take any
19 comments from anyone that might want to make comments about --
20 anybody from the public, anybody? I assume that the board
21 members have made their comments about pretty much everything.
22 So are you all planning on coming back this afternoon to hear
23 comments? Good.

24 But to wrap up this portion of the program, if you
25 will. Again, the advisory board, don't forget to fill out your

1 forms. And I want to tell you that Susan and I will be
2 transitioning off the relay team. The gentleman that will be
3 taking my place, his name is Bob Trapp. He will be excellent.
4 He will be fully aware of all your issues coming into it. I will
5 help him with the next advisory meeting. I'm very sad about it.
6 Don't ever think that I will be out of the picture, because I'll
7 be saying what's going on with relay all the time. But I was
8 assigned some other responsibilities, so I won't be officially
9 assigned as the administrator anymore. But I will be in the
10 background, and be making sure that Rick is doing that quality of
11 service testing. It will all still be within the same group. We
12 are a large group that works together. So Bob works with us
13 also. And anything that happens, I will be there. But as I
14 said, we will be transitioning. Bob will still be working on it,
15 Rick will still be working on it. As I said, a lady named Della
16 Fordham will be taking Susan's spot. All right, what's so funny,
17 Chris?

18 MR. WAGNER: I'm just glad some of you are still here.

19 MS. SALAK: And we do have an attorney assigned to
20 this. I don't know if you've met him, his name is Jason Rojas.
21 Martha Brown was our attorney, it's now Jason Rojas that gets the
22 questions funnelled to him, and he'll be working on the RFP,
23 hopefully. We will be planning our next agenda date for May,
24 unless you see the need for an earlier meeting. Do you? I know
25 you'll be doing your road trips. Would you like to see it before

1 May, or is May sufficient for the next advisory meeting?

2 MR. WAGNER: May is fine.

3 MS. SALAK: All right. So we'll officially end the
4 TASA meeting.

5 MR. WAGNER: I need to see about May. Let me check.
6 I'm trying to think about the road trip in May.

7 MS. SALAK: I can tell you our open dates right now.

8 MR. WAGNER: Can someone help me? May?

9 MS. SALAK: I'll tell you what, we can e-mail the group
10 and set it up different over the e-mail, a good date. It's just
11 start thinking of a good day. If we think we need a meeting
12 earlier, we can do it earlier. We want to accommodate everyone's
13 schedule. So we'll put an e-mail out next week saying, "What do
14 you think is a good day?" And we'll handle it that way, and then
15 we'll start getting the agenda together. The next meeting will
16 be in Tallahassee, though. So we'll stop this portion of the
17 meeting, and officially end the advisory committee meeting. But,
18 again, we'll be here at 1:30 for comments, and we'd love for you
19 to join us.

20 (Lunch recess until 1:30 p.m.)

21 MS. SALAK: We thought we'd get started again. Those
22 of you who were here this morning, glad to see you back again.
23 And I think we had a fruitful meeting this morning with a lot of
24 good input. As you know, this afternoon we've put aside so that
25 we can hear any comments that anyone would like to make from the

1 community. Any suggestions, anything that you would like us to
2 look into or overall concerns that you may have, and then we can
3 follow up with them at the Commission, or the FTRI, or Sprint, or
4 wherever is necessary. So is anyone here who would like to speak
5 today?

6 THE INTERPRETER: PRC and Sprint? Sprint.

7 SPEAKER: How is the partnership and how are they
8 evaluated? How is the program, the curriculum, you know like
9 the culture that they do in the training? Are you guys
10 responsible? Is Sprint responsible for that, or is that PRC
11 alone that does that? I would like to know that. How do you
12 work that process?

13 MS. SALAK: Just for my purposes, when you refer to a
14 partnership, what are you referring to?

15 SPEAKER: I just want to know how the evaluation is
16 set up with the deaf culture, the training of the CAs
17 themselves and how do they teach them?

18 MS. SALAK: Okay. Thank you. Who would like to
19 address that? Louis or Walter? Thank you.

20 MR. BERGER: That's actually a good question. The
21 curriculum for our deaf culture comes from Sprint. The actual
22 development of the modules comes from Sprint, with some input
23 from PRC as well. We have on our staff deaf managers who
24 actually facilitate that training, so it's not a hearing
25 person teaching deaf culture. There are deaf staff members.

1 And I think the partnership works well. In fact, I was
2 actually talking with our training manager the other day, and
3 he says he gauges how well a class is doing by how well one of
4 our deaf trainers comes out and says the class really enjoyed
5 the material, or there was a lively discussion. Because I
6 think one of the goals is to try and get that perception of
7 what it's like to be on the other end of that phone call,
8 which is why our training is set up so that an agent can get a
9 perspective of being the client, being the relay provider, and
10 being the other end. So you are at one point the TTY user,
11 and then you are at one point the voice user. So that you can
12 get a sensitivity for what it's like to be on a relay call. I
13 think I know everyone here knows Daniel Stacey who leads that
14 effort.

15 SPEAKER: How long is that person the quality -- how
16 long and what is the quality?

17 MR. BERGER: How long does the training last?

18 SPEAKER: Yes.

19 MR. BERGER: I mean, there are several modules. It's
20 not just one class. It's several modules throughout the
21 training period. What is the -- seven to ten hours of
22 instruction.

23 MS. SALAK: Are there certain criteria that have to be
24 met before they can be put on a relay call?

25 MR. BERGER: As that relates to deaf culture, or as it

1 realities to --

2 MS. SALAK: The requirements.

3 MR. BERGER: Oh, absolutely. I mean, as PRC, we
4 probably test our agents more than any other subcontractor or
5 center would just because we feel strongly that you have to
6 demonstrate in a lot of different areas whether you can
7 perform the relay function. One of the things also that we
8 take very seriously, in relay you have to multi-task. And we
9 do a lot of, you know, testing up front. But there really is
10 no way to know whether you will be able to do that
11 multi-tasking until after you've been taught all the
12 instruction and then you are given an opportunity to perform
13 in our testing environment.

14 And I know, I'll speak for Louis, I mean, each one of
15 his trainers, you cannot progress, we will not let you out
16 unless you can demonstrate knowledge in all of those different
17 disciplines. So it's not you just practice one call type and
18 you're out. No, you have to practice every single call type
19 that you may encounter. So it's -- I mean, as you can
20 imagine, it's a pretty detailed experience to go from walking
21 in the door to walking out as a relay agent. Let me just
22 personally say that's something we take very, very seriously.

23 MS. SALAK: Can you give some specific examples of the
24 type of tests that will be given and some of the requirements
25 that must be met before they're put on a relay call?

1 MR. BERGER: Sure. Louis is the training manager, so
2 I'm sure he can give you a sense.

3 MR. PEDROSA: The training is designed that we
4 administer five written tests, and each trainee has to pass
5 each test in order to continue. Should they not pass one of
6 those tests, then they are not allowed to continue their
7 training. And then only those people who are successful are
8 allowed to continue. Before they get online, they get
9 evaluated on the five basic call processes that Sprint
10 requires, and they have to pass the evaluation with 100
11 percent compliance and then they're allowed to get online.
12 They are tested to make sure that they are meeting the FCC 60
13 word per minute requirement. Presently Sprint is evaluating
14 the typing speed right now. So those are the requirements
15 that the agents are required to do.

16 In addition, the evaluation is recently looking close
17 at the voice clarity issue, so we make sure that they are
18 intelligible when processing calls.

19 MR. BERGER: And let me just add real quick. Before
20 you even get to the training environment, there are a battery
21 of tests that you will take. I mean, we go beyond just the
22 normal grammar, English, spelling, comprehension tests. We
23 actually go into more psychological tests to sort of determine
24 what your mind-set would be. Because relay operators take a
25 lot of criticism, they take a lot of grief in just the normal

1 course of business. And one of the things that we try to do
2 is be very up front with that and try to bring some support
3 behind what they're trying to do so that they don't
4 internalize it, they don't take it the wrong way, and that
5 they realize that it's a customer, it's a phone call, it's not
6 anything other than that. So we try to take them out of it so
7 they won't take things personal. So, yes, there are spelling,
8 grammar, and then some psychological tests we also add just
9 because we're concerned about that as well.

10 MS. SALAK: Chris, you had a question.

11 MR. WAGNER: I would like to add, what Greg said
12 earlier, I think that it would be a good idea if we encourage
13 some of the Deaf Service Center Association meetings that leaders
14 and hard-of-hearing leaders to get involved and go visit PRC, and
15 maybe they would better understand their operations and how they
16 work, and they could see the evaluation and the test process. I
17 know it gave me a much better picture of the whole process, you
18 know, when I see how it comes in and how it has to go out. How
19 did you understand that? How did you do that? You get a better
20 understanding. The community, I think, would get a better idea
21 if we make plans for them.

22 Maybe before the next TASA meeting to take a trip to
23 Miami and go to PRC and visit the center. Maybe spend the day
24 there at the center and get a better idea of the testing, how it
25 works, how the training works, how the CAs work. I think it

1 would give us a better picture. I think it would be a good
2 opportunity for maybe 15 deaf and hard-of-hearing leaders, FAD,
3 DSCA, SHHH, all those other different clubs, ALDA, they all get
4 together and they go visit the center one day. I think that
5 would be a wonderful opportunity.

6 MS. SALAK: From your comments, have you been Chris,
7 did you go down?

8 MR. WAGNER: No.

9 MR. BERGER: We are absolutely open to that. I mean,
10 some members of the board have already been there. We
11 actually love visitors, contrary to popular belief. We love
12 to have folks come down and visit. We have an environment
13 where we can show you things without confidentiality -- we can
14 actually set up a call so it's our own call as opposed to
15 watching anything of a sensitive nature. And I would
16 encourage you to work through Greg to make that happen. But
17 together Greg and I both definitely could set up an
18 opportunity for folks to come down.

19 MS. SALAK: Great. I think it's a great idea, Chris.
20 Rick?

21 MR. KOTTLER: You mentioned that you test for English
22 comprehension, and this is a real sore point with me, what is
23 your minimum level?

24 MR. BERGER: The test we have is designed for
25 entry-level college. That's the competency that we're scoring

1 for.

2 MR. KOTTLER: What's the level? I mean, if it's like a
3 TABE level, if it's like a TABE test, it's going to give you a
4 grade level comprehension.

5 MR. BERGER: I could look and see if I can maybe send
6 the test to you. Are you saying from how we score it?

7 MR. KOTTLER: I would like to see it. Because that's
8 my biggest contention is not -- you know, I have problems with
9 speed, and have problems with interruptions from the relay
10 operators, but the misspellings, the not understanding of words,
11 the basic English comprehension, accuracy has been a problem with
12 me in the past, and I don't know that that's being addressed
13 sufficiently.

14 MR. BERGER: Well, let me just give you a little
15 history about Precision Response Corporation. Relay isn't the
16 only business that our company does. I'm sure most of you
17 have heard of DirectTV, American Express, these are some of our
18 clients. So one of the neat things that we have available to
19 us is recruiting on a major scale. So when we recruit, we're
20 not only recruiting for the relay program; we're recruiting
21 for South Florida organizations and some of the top 500
22 organizations and companies in the nation.

23 So I can definitely provide more information as far as
24 you know, that process, because it's actually not related only
25 to us, it's related to other contractors that have stringent

1 rules as well about who does their calls, who manages their
2 business. Absolutely, when I say that it's very detailed,
3 it's very detailed. But you should be able to -- all of our
4 tests are scheduled to handle entry-level, college-level
5 comprehension. And it's not just for relay.

6 MS. SALAK: Jim?

7 MR. PETERSON: You're talking the entry-level, and what
8 about knowledge of Spanish and sign language and those different
9 things? That will influence how they speak English.

10 MR. BERGER: Sure. Actually the Spanish, our testing
11 for Spanish is developed through Berlitz, which is a
12 nationally known interpreting organization. Obviously our
13 sign language is done through our deaf staff members. So,
14 yeah, you're absolutely right, all of that is tested as well.

15 MR. WAGNER: I would like to ask a question. If you
16 have the time for the deaf user, the ASL user that is not using
17 correct grammar, not using correct English, do your CAs -- what
18 kind of training do they have for that? How is it possible for
19 them to change that to English like an interpreter does? They
20 are seeing ASL, but they're changing it to English. What kind of
21 training do you have -- you know, interpreters go through
22 intensive training for that. What kind of training do you guys
23 do? You know, store me go somebody might sign, and would they
24 type store me go, or are the CAs trained to change that into
25 English?

1 MR. PEDROSA: They are trained to change that into
2 conversational English. That's part of their deaf culture
3 training, and they cannot graduate from that culture training
4 with showing some mastery of that. In addition to the fact
5 that whenever we do practice calls with the agents in the
6 training environment, our scripts are designed to have ASL in
7 the TTY aspect, so the agents are expected to place that into
8 ASL. And in the final evaluation, three of our scripts are
9 designed to do that. So they get exposed to it in training.

10 MR. BERGER: Greg had actually mentioned earlier a
11 little bit, touched on a little bit about our refresher
12 program. You know, once an agent gets out on the floor, that
13 doesn't mean that their training stops. It's actually just
14 the beginning of their training. So every month we are
15 pulling agents offline and going over areas with their team
16 managers one-on-one or in a classroom setting to cover areas
17 that either Sprint may recognize or we may recognize from our
18 own internal tests. So it's not like you have to learn
19 everything going in, yet you have to have the core
20 competencies. You absolutely have to have mastery of all the
21 different call types. But, obviously, as you progress, your
22 mastery of things like ASL changing, glossing, gets better as
23 you progress. And there are Sprint-developed materials and
24 there is also PRC-developed materials that we've worked
25 together that we think are excellent in nature and allow us to

1 continue from bringing someone in the door, to making them a
2 competent operator, to hopefully keeping them on as long as
3 they would like to be with our program.

4 MS. SALAK: What is your turnover rate for CAs?

5 MR. BERGER: Well, actually, believe it or not, the
6 average CA stays with us roughly about two years, which in our
7 industry and even the call center industry is huge. Our
8 absenteeism is very, very low because we think we try to have
9 an environment where our folks can be successful.

10 MS. SALAK: Do you see a difference between your relay
11 area versus the American Express?

12 MR. BERGER: Absolutely. Believe it or not, we're
13 better. We're better on absenteeism, we're better on turnover
14 rate.

15 MS. SALAK: And it's relay that's every two years?

16 MR. BERGER: Yes. In fact, I bet my staff, because
17 they thought it was higher, that the amount of time was
18 shorter, and I think I was the only one in the room that said
19 about two years. Which is pretty amazing if you figure
20 someone walks in the door and they stay with you two years.

21 MS. SALAK: Would anybody else like to ask Walter or
22 Luis a question while they're up here? Mr. Casey?

23 MR. J. CASEY: My name is Jim Casey. I'm scratching
24 my head in wonder, because when you say two years, and you get
25 new people coming in every two years, and you have to train

1 them in ASL. For example, if I say, "San Francisco touch
2 finished me," May sound strange to any average person reading
3 that on a TTY. So a person could translate that meaning, "I
4 have been to San Francisco." Because in deaf sign, finished
5 means past tense, have been. So how do you solve that
6 two-year retraining new people in ASL?

7 MR. BERGER: Let me clarify that a little bit. We
8 don't train every two years. We train constantly just because
9 of the size of our center. We train in small numbers, so
10 that's how we handle that. We're putting smaller numbers, and
11 we're training constantly so that there's a steady stream of
12 folks that you don't have to wait two years for a competent
13 operator to come along. That's a good question. That would
14 be kind of tough if we only trained every two years.

15 MS. KIM SMITH: Okay. This is regarding this training
16 I'm really sensitive about this changing into English, you
17 know, the ASL to the English. And I was wondering, ASL is a
18 very short language, you know. It's not as long, you know.
19 And it takes most interpreters ten years to get well
20 certified. Ten years. How is it possible to go through
21 training in a relay, number one, that quickly; and number two,
22 regarding the skill of the supervisors.

23 The supervisors, I'm still going back to that
24 confidential issue, you know. I'm still thinking about that.
25 But normally, you know, when you call a business, you're

1 waiting, and they -- as you're waiting you listen to this
2 phone call: Your call may be monitored for quality assurance
3 purposes. You understand? While you're waiting it says that.
4 And you're still in the process, because they're trying to
5 improve their quality. And I expect the same from CAs. While
6 the supervisor is randomly picking calls that they are
7 checking on and monitoring, I strongly believe that there
8 should be something somewhere, somehow to let every caller
9 know that this is a continuous monitoring process and you may
10 be monitored for quality assurance.

11 So the question is: Can you answer my question about the
12 training, the ASL?

13 MR. PEDROSA: Regarding the ASL, obviously some people
14 learn that better than others. But Sprint's policy regarding
15 ASL translation is if the agent feels comfortable with the
16 language, they understand and can put it into conversational
17 English, they can, and they should. If the ASL is very, very
18 strong and the agent is not able to place it into ALS, then
19 they will read it verbatim. So that is the policy with
20 regards to ASL translation. With regard to the other question
21 --

22 MR. BERGER: Actually, you bring up a very good point.
23 If any of our account managers would like to touch on it,
24 you're more than welcome to as well. Absolutely, it's
25 obviously a learned skill to be able to do that, and I

1 certainly wouldn't want to stand here and try to tell you that
2 right out of training someone is glossing ASL perfectly when
3 you, yourself, have said that it takes ten years. But, you
4 know, as Lou said, we're looking for a proficiency level that
5 both Sprint, and the state, and the FCC is comfortable with,
6 as far as ASL. I don't know if that answers your question.
7 These guys that have some experience in other states may want
8 to touch on that as well.

9 And I will try to address the supervisor -- I will try
10 to address the team manager on calls if you guys don't want to
11 touch that one. I will try to explain my interpretation of
12 what our monitoring --

13 MS. SALAK: Robert or Greg, do you want to make any
14 comments related to ASL?

15 MR. GANTT: Okay. The training, like he said, we have
16 in-depth curriculum with the deaf culture. We have that and how
17 to read and type. So, yes, you're very true. Interpreters can
18 take ten years to be proficient. But for reading it is not quite
19 as -- I agree, it can be difficult. But the more that you
20 process the calls, the more you get used to that behavior, and
21 the gloss, I go store now, can be changed.

22 When someone is very difficult and there is no
23 understanding, the CA is trained to call a supervisor to come
24 over to help. The supervisor most of the time has been a CA in
25 the past, and they've been promoted, so they can help with the

1 glossing, and maybe clarify it. Most of the time that's what
2 happens.

3 MR. J. CASEY: One thing that bothers me is your
4 comment about verbatim, meaning word-for-word. And if the CA
5 takes San Francisco touch finished me word-for-word to a
6 customer, the customer is going to be lost.

7 MR. BERGER: I'm just saying that comment is if you're
8 not able to translate that into English. If you are, then you
9 would make that translation. And if not -- and Greg is
10 absolutely right, that you would call a supervisor over. You
11 might call one of our deaf staff members over to help
12 translate.

13 Do you have -- are there specific examples of where
14 this has happened? I mean, clearly it's something we're
15 concerned about, definitely. But are there specific examples?

16 MS. MOYER: My name is Carol Moyer, I'm the director
17 for the deaf service center in Port Charlotte, and I've got
18 several issues I want to talk about. We have a client who is
19 strictly an ASL user, contacts us for whatever reason through
20 the relay every time he needs to discuss anything. And we
21 have never had a conversation with him where ASL was changed
22 into English for us. I have repeatedly had apologies from the
23 relay operators that, I'm sorry, I don't understand him at
24 all. And I asked on several occasions if there was anyone who
25 could help and I was told no. This is the best I can do.

1 Fortunately, he was calling a Deaf Service Center, and we were
2 more than willing to work with it. And on many occasions we
3 understood, essentially, what he was trying to get across.
4 But if you're dealing with the general public, that is not
5 going to happen, and it's going to result in hang-up. So that
6 may be something that you want to possibly look at a little
7 bit stronger.

8 One concern I have, and this is in reference to the
9 training, let's assume that I have passed all the initial
10 screenings and have been accepted for training. How long is
11 that training going to take?

12 MR. BERGER: During a day training session, where we're
13 training eight hours a day, that is going to take two weeks.
14 In the evening we take three weeks.

15 MS. MOYER: So maximum, in three weeks time I am
16 prepared to go online with an active call?

17 MR. BERGER: Yes

18 MS. MOYER: And you have a turnover rate of two years?

19 MR. BERGER: Yes

20 MS. MOYER: I think under those circumstances I would
21 question the success rate of the training, and possibly
22 reinforce pretty strongly on going to workshops, mandatory
23 training.

24 MR. BERGER: Oh, absolutely. In fact, I think Lou can
25 tell you a little bit about what we call our 30-60-90-program.

1 Which actually, thirty days in, you come in on a Saturday, and
2 spend the whole day going over all the call processes that you
3 have had within that first 30-day period. After 60 days you
4 do the exact same thing, and at 90 days. And each time it's
5 more in-depth for the eight hours that you're there all day.
6 You're taking tests.

7 I don't think the learning ever stops once you begin the
8 relay process. Are we perfect? No, I'm not going to say
9 we're perfect. Absolutely, I think there is a lot we can
10 learn from forums like this and listening to the customers. I
11 think this is excellent, because I think both Luis and I can
12 then turn around and take back, and maybe look at, you know,
13 what we're doing.

14 I don't think that we feel like we can ever be
15 distanced from our customer base. I think we all are
16 passionate about what we do. And if given constructive
17 feedback, absolutely, we will definitely, working in
18 conjunction with Sprint, look at how we do things. Because,
19 you know, we certainly don't want to upset our customer base.
20 Why in the world would we want to upset the folks that we
21 depend on for our livelihood? And why certainly wouldn't we
22 want to deliver the best possible product that we absolutely
23 can.

24 And I know I'm more than willing to give you my name
25 and number, and you can absolutely call me directly if you

1 ever have a concern or if you ever would like to just voice --
2 the one thing we certainly don't want to get to is where
3 customers are so frustrated that they don't want to use the
4 service. I mean, I've been involved with relay for almost ten
5 years now. And it's something that's personal with me,
6 because it's something that I think from where I've been, I
7 realize the nature of -- when Maggie earlier talked about
8 someone crying about being able to make a phone call. When we
9 started Florida Relay I was involved in that and actually got
10 calls from people who were thanking us for providing a service
11 that before then never existed.

12 So I can't say strongly enough how much we care about
13 what we're doing, the product that we're putting out, the
14 agents that are on the floor. I know I personally walk the
15 floor every single day. And if there's one thing that I would
16 want to leave you with today is that there are really
17 dedicated people in the Miami Center who truly come to work
18 every day and care about what they do, and care about putting
19 out the best possible product. If there's one thing I can
20 leave you with today, it would be that. And also that we're
21 always available to listen.

22 I mean, we are so -- if there's one thing I will say:
23 I think that we were a huge center. People talk about what
24 have you done recently? Why have you just now started to get
25 better? I think we were large, we were huge, we were this

1 huge monster. And it's not that we didn't care about quality,
2 because we actually developed a lot of quality initiatives
3 that have been taken up throughout Sprint's other centers. I
4 mean, we have always cared about what happens in that cubical.
5 My motto every day is: If everyone in the project is not
6 doing something to make sure that that relay call is not the
7 best product we can put out, then you shouldn't be here. And
8 every single day we should challenge ourselves to do that.
9 Again, I would just love to stress to you that truly there are
10 people in the Miami Center that absolutely do feel your pain
11 and absolutely do want us to be able to provide the level of
12 service that you expect.

13 SPEAKER: I would almost vote for him, you know that.

14 MS. SALAK: Yes, he's enthusiastic.

15 Carol, one comment about what you said, and then,
16 Chris, we'll go to you. But you mentioned several times that
17 people said no, there is no one that I can get help from. If you
18 would please get that CA number and pass it along to Walter, me,
19 Greg, any one of us.

20 MS. MOYER: I think I would probably save those,
21 because there were concerns forwarded to a supervisor. I'm
22 sure all of us can tell stories about asking for a supervisor
23 and getting hung up on. I worked for far too many years as a
24 customer service supervisor not to understand exactly what
25 that person is doing, and why, and what the motivation is.

1 And I know what steps were taken on my behalf to fix that.
2 Now that we have alternative means in addition to notifying
3 Sprint, I think I have most of that information still on file
4 that I can forward.

5 MS. SALAK: Okay. Thank you, that would be great.
6 Feel free. Walter, us, me, Rick, any of us.

7 MS. MOYER: Multiple copies.

8 MS. SALAK: Pardon me?

9 MS. MOYER: Multiple copies.

10 MS. SALAK: All right. That's fine, too. Chris?

11 MR. WAGNER: I would like to change this to a positive
12 I want you to know that we have found a lot of wonderful CAs. I
13 want you to know that. Sometimes, you know, we expect a perfect
14 system, but we can't do that. I want you to know that you guys
15 are doing a wonderful job with the services. We're not here to
16 attack you. We really want to give you more tools to improve and
17 to continue to improve. I think the idea of getting the
18 leadership in there so that you can offer them and show them the
19 training, and they can see how it is in the box and they get an
20 idea.

21 So I just want to tell you that you guys are doing
22 good, that you are doing positive. And I wanted to make sure I
23 said that and emphasized that. But I also want to say that since
24 June, July, Greg Gantt, since he's come to Florida, I want to
25 tell you that things are good. And I've noticed a lot of good

1 things since he's shown up in Florida. And I've noticed that the
2 communication has improved, and instant response, and instant
3 follow-up. And I'm impressed. And I'm not the only one with
4 this story. Other people have the same story. When I talk to
5 other people, they tell me the same story. You know, people that
6 are in my membership group. They noticed the energy, the
7 improvement, you know. People in Florida have noticed in the
8 short time he's been here. So I want to applaud Greg.

9 And, Finally, I want to say about -- we discussed
10 reviewing the PSA, you know, through the FTRI program. You know,
11 remember that meeting we had, August I guess it was. I want to
12 tell you that I'm impressed now, that I've noticed more and more
13 stuff out. On the public service announcements, I have noticed
14 more of that, and it's made a difference. People, clients,
15 hearing friends, oh, yeah, yeah, I've seen, you know, I've seen
16 that, I've seen that on TV, you know.

17 I'm trying to find the wording and stuff, but I've
18 noticed that our money is being well used for the public service
19 announcements. And it's important for us to know that. And the
20 business partnership that they're doing, I've noticed that's been
21 improved. Recently I've noticed, you know, I've been introduced
22 to six or eight different business partnerships at the Southern
23 Deaf Showcase, at their expense they came, and they set up
24 exhibits to show the deaf community. As a result of that, one
25 business they asked -- you know, they wanted to introduce deaf

1 people. They wanted them to work in their company. You know, I
2 think that's more of a result of what's going on, and these are
3 the things that are happening.

4 MS. SALAK: Thank you for sharing that, Chris, we
5 really do appreciate that.

6 Walter, you wanted to make a comment about Kim's
7 concern about confidentiality.

8 MR. BERGER: Yeah, I didn't want to lose sight of
9 that. One of the things that obviously we're trying to
10 accomplish. A team manager in the Sprint world -- and I don't
11 want to say Sprint versus PRC, because actually it's our
12 world.

13 In our world one of the things that we think is
14 important is to have a team manager available to an agent at
15 all times, which is why I love it when someone tells me that
16 they can't find a team manager or they can't find a
17 supervisor. But that team manager, we actually encourage them
18 to walk around and look at calls. That's part of their
19 function. So when you say that you're concerned that someone
20 may be seeing your call, well, that's actually what we sort of
21 do want to happen. We do want the team manager, and it's only
22 the team managers that are even allowed to do the call
23 monitoring. They would be walking through the floor, and we
24 encourage them to plug in, listen to calls, because we want
25 them to inspect the process.

1 So that is a normal course of what goes on. I think
2 that clearly, confidentiality is one of our most important
3 topics of discussion. As far as, you know, that call, once
4 that screen goes away, the CA should never have any knowledge
5 or should not even have -- in fact, the best call is when it's
6 over, the agent can't even remember what was discussed. And
7 that's the way we teach our agents, that way you are not going
8 to have to even worry about whether you have breached
9 confidentiality, because you're not even thinking past that
10 call that just hung up.

11 But the team managers who are doing that call monitorin
12 are doing that call monitoring on the floor as well. So
13 that's just the normal inspection so that we know they are in
14 force, and we know they're out there.

15 As a matter of fact, I had an agent who was new and was a
16 little upset because she thought she was being targeted. She
17 said every time I look around a team manager is coming in and
18 plugging in. I said that's great. How do you think that
19 helps you do your job better? She said, well, I guess I
20 better do it right. And I'm thinking that's the end that we
21 want is for you, not because you're afraid, but because you
22 think that following the process is the correct way to do your
23 job.

24 So we encourage team managers to be out on the floor,
25 we encourage supervisors to plug in, to pay attention to calls

1 so that they can use their experience to make sure that,
2 again, we're putting out the best product.
3 So that confidentiality that guards the team manager being
4 able to go and correct an agent, also governs when they're
5 plugged in. Because we're not saving any of that
6 conversation, we're not copying any of that conversation, and
7 the only thing we're using it for is just corrective behaviors
8 to correct what happened. Because then what you can do is you
9 can -- just as Greg said, you can take the agent offline,
10 simulate that call, not the exact same call, but simulate a
11 call an agent may be having difficulty with, and then work not
12 on that specific call, but work on that call type.

13 MS. KIM SMITH: Yes, but that's not the focus of my
14 issue. My issue is that -- and there is nothing written,
15 message or saying that all calls may be monitored for quality
16 purposes. Anything, anywhere, I don't see that anywhere. I
17 don't see that anywhere, and that's all I'm asking. So all
18 the people know that it may be monitored. The reason is some
19 of that stuff, you know, for example, like the positive thing
20 for my financial, or for work improvement for quality, it's a
21 positive thing, and we can accept that, but that's just
22 something that would make me feel better because it's a
23 confidentiality issue.

24 MR. BERGER: Greg, that's your question. We will
25 certainly take your feedback, definitely. I think I

1 understand that it's the disclaimer that you're concerned
2 about; not the actual fact that a team manager may be
3 monitoring that call. But a type of disclaimer.

4 MS. SALAK: Greg.

5 MR. GANTT: From a legal perspective, from a training
6 perspective, yes, we will check into that.

7 MS. SALAK: Mr. Casey?

8 MR. J. CASEY: I can't help about being fascinated
9 with all this training information you pass out, but nothing
10 is said about stress. There must be an awful lot of stress on
11 the CA, and the anxiety must be high. How do you train them
12 to accept that and overcome that?

13 MR. BERGER: That's an excellent point. Let me just
14 tell you we currently have a program that we've had from the
15 beginning. Which is an anonymous -- an agent can dial an 800
16 number and speak to a licensed counselor, a licensed counselor
17 about any stress they've been feeling. Let me also say that
18 one of the things we try to do is we try to put together and
19 environment where it's not necessarily punitive; so that we're
20 not concerned about -- we understand that folks are going to
21 make mistakes. We understand that we're all human, and in the
22 course of doing your job you're going to make a mistake. What
23 we try to do is eliminate the difference between making a
24 mistake and not being able to function in our environment. If
25 you make a mistake we're there to work with you, to improve

1 you, to get you where we need you to be.

2 If you're not functioning at the level that we expect,
3 then it's not a punitive issue. And the great thing about
4 Precision Response is we can then move you over to an account
5 that might be more suitable for you. So one of the ways we
6 try to reduce the stress is make it not about you're going to
7 lose your job, but make it about let's try to find some place
8 for you that's a better fit. We want you to be here if you
9 can follow the expectations, and you guys know better than I
10 do that there are a lot of rules in relay and there are a lot
11 of specific things that should happen every single time
12 exactly the same way. And that can be stressful.
13 So we try to take the stress out, we try to make it a positive
14 environment. We don't want to make it necessarily punitive,
15 where folks are afraid that someone is going to come tap them
16 on the shoulder and you're out of here because you screwed up
17 on that call. No, it's a learning process. And if it's not a
18 good fit for you in the relay world, it might be a good fit
19 for you for Taco Bell or DirecTV or somewhere else.

20 MR. KOTTLER: Carol touched on it, and I know it's a
21 pet peeve of mine, and the last time we had a meeting was two
22 days before this happened to me, and we were discussing yesterday
23 in the state meeting is that all of us have at one time or
24 another been hung up on by one of your operators when we've asked
25 for a supervisor. What are you doing to make sure that that

1 doesn't happen?

2 MR. BERGER: Well, I will tell you one thing that
3 we've always done, and we continue to do, is we do our own
4 test calls. And our test calls are, we'll dial in and we'll
5 say, "I need to speak to a supervisor." We won't say anything
6 other than that, and clock to see long it takes to get a
7 supervisor.

8 And part of my last answer applies here as well. I
9 mean, if we try to create an environment that's non-punitive,
10 the folks aren't going to be worried about -- if someone wants
11 your agent number, or someone wants to speak to a supervisor,
12 it could be to give you a compliment. So you shouldn't
13 anticipate, you know, what is going to happen. Now, folks are
14 human. So one of the things we try to do is understand the
15 nature behind why folks might hang up. So some of the things
16 that we need to do is we need to make sure that team managers
17 are present. We need to make sure that whatever makes an
18 agent feel like it's okay to do that, that maybe there is some
19 deterrent out there.

20 One is -- and, you know, even before we initiated our
21 -- we actually called it our summer of quality, because we are
22 actually thinking along these lines. Before we started
23 launching, you know, tons of calls into the network, because
24 we wanted to understand how we were doing, there are things
25 that we were doing with our supervisors to try to get them to

1 understand that you need to be out there. We put some
2 accountability in place, so that now the team managers are
3 more closely linked with their employees so that there is more
4 of a relationship between, how are you doing, weekly
5 conversations, so that those types of things are high on our
6 radar list.

7 I mean, I wouldn't try to stand here and tell you that
8 it doesn't happen, because it's happened to me. But what we
9 can do, definitely, is make sure that we reduce it and make
10 sure that we try to eliminate it as much as humanly possible.
11 So it's on my radar screen.

12 MR. KOTTLER: But what is the penalty to the operator
13 for doing that?

14 MR. BERGER: There are probably more stiffer
15 penalties than you might imagine. And I know half way into
16 this we've gotten some feedback that, oh, we want you to work
17 with folks. But, you know, I think both Lou and I, because we
18 feel passionately about the product that we put out, we do
19 remove people from the account for hanging up on calls, for
20 not getting a supervisor. We don't give you the option to go
21 to another account. We terminate. And that's why when I say
22 that we were huge, and we were this large monster, well, we're
23 down from a center that was in the mid-700s to a center that's
24 500. And we feel like maybe that's more manageable for us.
25 Maybe we then can get closer to our agents and give them more

1 support than we were able to do when we were 700. And we were
2 running around, and we were concerned about supporting the
3 network. Maybe our concern now -- we called it our summer of
4 quality, was to focus on what we're doing in front of us, and
5 not try to be huge, but try to focus on quality.

6 And I also want to leave you not thinking that quality
7 wasn't important to us, because it always has been. I come
8 from a customer service background, so quality has always been
9 very, very important to me. So from that standpoint, and I
10 would love for Robert to get up here and defend me, because
11 we've worked in the past, a lot. It's a concern of mine, it's
12 one of my pet peeves. It's something that I lose sleep over.
13 Because believe it or not, we all take personally the work
14 that we do for the State of Florida.

15 And also, we love comments, positive, negative. We
16 love to hear what people think. And it doesn't matter if
17 everyone in the room had something negative, I think Lou and I
18 would walk away from this trying to figure out a positive way
19 to turn that perception into a positive reality.

20 So we absolutely love this opportunity to listen, love
21 this opportunity to get feedback. Because, as I said, you're
22 our client base. You represent our client base. Lou and I
23 feel like this is a wonderful opportunity for us to hear what
24 is really going on.

25 MS. SALAK: May I ask, did your downsize just happen

1 from 700 to 500?

2 MR. BERGER: It happened just recently

3 MS. SALAK: Like within the last few months?

4 MR. BERGER: Yes.

5 MS. SALAK: And I am curious about your 1-800 number.

6 So it's a counselor. Do you keep statistics on that at all to
7 see what your stress level is?

8 MR. BERGER: We do. It's an HR function, so there's
9 only so much information that we can get back from it, but we
10 do get reports. In some instances we do get an opportunity,
11 because there are referrals that are made from that line. We
12 do get information to help people adjust without getting any
13 of their information. But we do get some information if we
14 have to interact and work with them and maybe help develop
15 them. I don't know that we get numbers. We may get reports
16 from HR to go address certain individuals, or we may need
17 support information where maybe they've been referred to a
18 crisis counselor, in which case we would then not hold that
19 against them, but then maybe put them on administrative duty
20 for a while, or whatever we might need to do to support them.

21 MS. SALAK: Is that frequent?

22 MR. BERGER: No, actually, it's not. You know, a lot
23 of it -- Lou has to take a lot of credit for that. We touched
24 a little bit on the training process. There was a lot -- that
25 it is small. That really isn't a small process. It's

1 something -- we're actually teaching sign language in the
2 center. It's something that we're always doing, so we're
3 always trying to do functions that help the agents feel more
4 like a team and a family and try to offset.

5 I mean, there are days when you see an agent and you know they
6 have had a rough day. I mean, and a lot of it is just a
7 supervisor going over to them and saying, listen, I understand
8 where you've been, it's going to be like that. Maybe you need
9 to take a day off, maybe take an extra break. It's being able
10 to see the folks that you deal with every day, and maybe
11 seeing those subtle changes that happen to them.

12 MS. SALAK: Does anyone have any other observations or
13 comments they would like to make to Walter or Louis? Chris.

14 MR. WAGNER: I'm still interested in that group leader
15 going to observe, because I think it would give us some tools.
16 We need to do it. The sooner the better.

17 MR. BERGER: That would be great. We would love it.

18 MS. SALAK: Okay. Jim.

19 MR. GANTT: I still would like to have the tour of the
20 center, yes, I will take care of that and I will make the plans,
21 and I will put all of that together, and we'll get together with
22 schedules for a time. I would be happy to have a group tour.

23 MR. WAGNER: I think more like the board of the
24 different state organizations, you know, DSCF, SHHH, FAD, all
25 those different organizations, get together and maybe have a

1 discussion with the team to give us some ideas and stuff of
2 what's going on, so that we can work better together and have
3 some tools. Because, you know, you never know what we have, what
4 knowledge.

5 MS. SALAK: I think that's excellent. I have some
6 staff people I would like to send to that also to interact and
7 hear the comments and the feedback. So, Walter, plan a visit
8 from all of us. That would be great.

9 MR. BERGER: Absolutely. That would be great.
10 Certainly put that together.

11 MS. SALAK: All right. I think Walter and Louis, I
12 think that's everything. Walter asked me when he arrived here
13 today if he would have to speak, and I said, well, it really
14 depends on the comments. Yes.

15 MS. KIM SMITH: Not only PRC or Sprint, but I don't
16 know where I can address this issue or who to address it to.
17 Several calls I made through TRS, the relay, the different
18 video -- different relays, I was frustrated, I couldn't get
19 through. I realized that our phone setup in that area code
20 may be, you know, calling the toll free number. Some toll
21 free numbers are blocked in some area codes. They won't
22 accept our call, because all calls made -- you know, they're
23 actually made to be made through another area. You know what
24 I mean?

25 So Florida FRS in Miami area, you know, which is a 305

1 area, and my area code is the 352 area, and the 800 number is
2 designed only for the 352 area. So when it calls to make the
3 call from Miami back, it's blocked, and I can't get through.

4 MR. WAGNER: Yes, I can discuss it. We had a
5 discussion about this, Greg and I had a discussion, and that's
6 really a good point. Would you like to share that, Greg?

7 MR. GANTT: That's an issue with the 800 limitations.
8 Many companies set up 800 numbers for specific areas, you know,
9 they have different areas, different numbers for different areas.
10 They're not nationwide. So if you call the center in Miami, if
11 it's nationwide, they can process that 800. But if in your
12 situation it's a local 800 type number situation, and if the
13 Miami Center needs to try and call that -- you know, if it works
14 in the center, it's fine. But if it's in a different one, they
15 may have to go to another area. It's a limit of the 800s. And
16 we have a procedure to overcome that limitation. It's called 800
17 reg or something, you know that Louis?

18 MR. PEDROSA: Reg 800.

19 MR. GANTT: And we're training our CAs any time you try
20 and call an 800 and it's blocked, then they have to do that
21 specific reg 800. And it will overcome that, and then the
22 process will go through, the call will go through. So if you
23 experience that and the CA says it's blocked and I can't, it
24 becomes a training issue and not a technical issue. So you need
25 to let us know, so we can re-check that and make sure the CA

1 knows about that, how to process that call.

2 MS. SCHOOLAR: I wanted to add something to that. Greg
3 is absolutely right about the regional 800 through TRS, we have
4 that ability. But if you're making video relay calls and you're
5 making Internet calls and you're getting blocked, we don't have
6 that ability. So that's a different issue. We're not doing reg
7 800 on video relay. It's coming in on the Internet, and so that
8 might be what is happening. That TRS is not a problem, but the
9 Internet calls are.

10 MR. WAGNER: The same thing with CapTel.

11 MS. KIM SMITH: But it didn't work for my friend. I was with
12 her, and we went through the relay, and they realized the
13 mistake, and then no. So they went back and used the regular
14 relay, and we contacted -- it was to contact Time Warner. You
15 know, they were responsible for that Internet. And so our
16 accessibility to that account, the confidentiality was
17 blocked. We kept trying to call through the Florida Relay,
18 and it still was blocked. And I think it was because -- I
19 think it was that particular one, you know, for Time Warner.
20 The FRS said that we can, we do have that ability to overcome
21 it, but that particular one was maybe sensitive, and it was
22 blocked. That was the one issue.

23 And, you know, I don't know. You see what I'm talking about?

24 MR. GANTT: Yes, the CA processed it, but it was still
25 blocked? Then it becomes an issue with that organization. We

1 need to know that, though. Again, I need to hear about this.
2 This is the first time I'm hearing about it today. And you give
3 me a CA number so I can check that particular call, and I can
4 take it up there.

5 MR. KOTTLER: I have one more question for you, Greg.
6 This 800, it brings up the issue of 211, which is crisis line.
7 Now, this is not your problem, but a lot of the 211 systems are
8 not TDD compatible yet, and we're fighting with a lot of areas in
9 the state.

10 If you go on and call the relay, and you tell them to
11 dial 211, you get Miami's crisis line. Is there a way for our
12 people -- I mean, right now Palm Beach County is in the process
13 of becoming TDD-compatible. So hopefully it will not be an
14 issue, but it is an issue in other places in the state. Can we
15 call in and say, "Can give me 211 in Martin County?" Or 211 in
16 Orange County? Or something like that? And get that actually
17 through the relay or not? Is that possible?

18 MR. GANTT: Okay. We know about that 211, and we've
19 been encouraging -- nationwide the different states have already
20 started that 211 service. And me, personally, I don't know the
21 process, how that routes to the local 211. Do you know how it's
22 done? You guys don't know?

23 MR. BERGER: Well, it's in the table where you're
24 able to do that with the 911 service. Maybe the only thing I
25 can think -- we will certainly do some research. It will take

1 a little time to do the 211. We had the same issues with 911.
2 If we dial that locally we get the local service.

3 MR. KOTTLER: Yes. And unfortunately, it should not be
4 an issue for you. It should be taken care of at the 211 crisis
5 level. They should be TDD compatible. But, unfortunately, they
6 are not. And so it ceases to become accessible even through the
7 relay.

8 THE INTERPRETER: She had a question, a comment.

9 MS. SALAK: Yes, Carol.

10 MS. MOYER: I think my question would be directed to either
11 Greg or Maggie, and that's in reference to the VCO users being
12 able to dial 711 rather than a special number for VCO users.
13 Has anything been done to correct that situation?

14 MR. GANTT: Carol, can you help me? Can you help me
15 research that situation, that you can't call 711 from VCO?

16 MS. MOYER: Yes, what do you need?

17 MR. GANTT: I'm sorry. Would you say your question
18 again so that I can understand it.

19 MS. MOYER: A VCO user attempting to place a call through the
20 relay. If they dial 711, we've experienced incidences where
21 they were told the call cannot be made through the 711 number,
22 and that they have to call a different special 800 number in
23 order to use that VCO successfully. And yet all of the PSAs
24 and everything referred to 711.

25 MR. GIUNTOLI: Hello. I'm Robert. Yes. For all rela

1 customers base, only 5 percent of our customers make VCO
2 calls, so not all the CAs make VCO calls every day. That's
3 why we set up a separate 800 number for VCO calls only. When
4 you call the VCO 800 number, you get an agent who handles VCO
5 calls more efficiently. When you call 711, you reach the
6 general relay group. We don't have the technical stuff to
7 route 711 VCO to those special agents.

8 Does that answer your question?

9 MS. MOYER: Is it possible for a 711 agent to
10 transfer the call to someone capable of handling rather than
11 force the caller to have to call back?

12 MS. SALAK: Maggie will answer that.

13 MS. SCHOOLAR: Yes, it is possible. Any agent can
14 handle a VCO call. So someone calling 711, the agent should
15 process it anyway. But if the customer wants to reach our
16 specially dedicated VCO agents, we have a separate 800 number.
17 We also have an ability to transfer it, but I didn't realize that
18 was an issue in Florida. This is the first I've heard of it.
19 And so I'll go back and see whether or not that is something that
20 we can implement here or not. Our new platform is going to have
21 the capability of reading an incoming VCO caller and sending it
22 to that gate automatically. So this issue should only be an
23 issue for a few months, anyway, but I'll go back and look at the
24 routing ability in Florida.

25 MS. SALAK: Thank you, Maggie. Chris?

1 MR. WAGNER: One final comment. All the things we're
2 talking about is the training, that we need to do more training.
3 You know, I know we say that again, we need to improve the
4 training for the community. And we have taken responsibility.
5 They have, to provide more training and continuous training to
6 the deaf community, to the hard-of-hearing community, to the
7 users, the VCO users. And I think that the training will
8 continue. And by the time people, you know, before they saw the
9 training, and they didn't look at how to make sure each user uses
10 the relay service. For example, we need to train the community
11 about reg 800. Sometimes they call and call, and they're
12 informed about the reg 800. They need to be able to let the
13 operator know that they can overcome that limitation.

14 So I think that we need more training. You know, staff
15 and for all of us in the community as well need the training.

16 MS. SALAK: Beth.

17 BETH: I would just like you to know that I've been
18 working with the deaf service center for ten years. The
19 biggest problem is we have so many clients who are speech
20 impaired that come in my office. Mostly they want me to train
21 a hearing carryover phone, HCO. So I'm trying to teach them
22 how to set up relay service. Many CAs do not know much about
23 HCO. And most of the time when CA answers, they type it to
24 them, but client type HCO wait for them to respond like HCO on
25 CA, but still the typing, HCO is still typing to that person.

1 It's just not -- CA is supposed to talk to that person. That
2 person is typing to CA because they can't talk, speech
3 impaired. So that's the biggest problem we have now. They
4 think I don't think know how to teach them to use HCO. I
5 wonder how many percent do CAs know how to use HCO. I know
6 most know how to use TTY or VCO, fine. But HCO there is a
7 smaller percent of people that use it, but I feel the CAs are
8 not qualified in how to use it.

9 MS. SALAK: Greg, you want to answer her?

10 MR. GANTT: Yes. We faced that situation again and
11 again nationwide. The call, the HCO, less than 1 percent of our
12 total calls. That does not mean -- don't get me wrong, that does
13 not mean it's not a problem. We do training with the CAs, all of
14 them in those calls. And they're all involved with HCO, and they
15 are trained. You can imagine they're used to all these calls.
16 Most calls are TTY, maybe a few VCOs. And then out of the blue
17 comes this HCO call and they are real awkward with it.
18 Naturally, because they have been trained in it, but sometimes --
19 so we try to have a CA call a supervisor, and be reminded of how
20 to make that HCO call, and what the process is.

21 MS. SALAK: You want to add, Maggie?

22 MS. SCHOOLAR: One thing that's really exciting about
23 the new platform that we're going to be rolling is the tools that
24 will be included on the new desktop for the agents. Specifically
25 for HCO and our call types that are never used, so it does freak

1 the agents out when they see it. Our new platform is going to be
2 Windows based. And when an HCO call comes in, it's just going to
3 flash to the agent exactly what to do. And so it will walk the
4 agent through the call processing steps. This has been an issue
5 that we've had for as many years as we've had different call
6 types. But with the new platform, it's going to be real
7 exciting, because it's going to help the agents go through all
8 the steps, and you shouldn't have the problems that you're faced
9 with right now.

10 MS. SALAK: Robert, were you going to speak also -- al'
11 right. All right. Are there any last questions? We're going to
12 have to wind things down in a moment, only because we don't have
13 the room for much longer.

14 Mr. Casey?

15 MR. J. CASEY: I would like to introduce myself again
16 because I came here this morning with a different hat, and
17 that was on the customer side. But now I'm hear representing
18 Crown Manufacturing Company, which is based in Fort Worth,
19 Texas. And Crown had a hard time getting a bid in Florida for
20 a long, long time. So I'm just newly hired, and I'm learning
21 about the process. I just learned about this board. I don't
22 know how frequent you have a meeting.

23 I need information. What is the proper process to get
24 into the bidding process to get Crown distributed into
25 Florida? I would like to explain to the board and the others

1 why Crown is a good product. One, when we have a blackout,
2 the blackout that occurred in the northeast not long ago, and
3 many deaf people called Crown and thanked Crown for their good
4 new battery. That battery in Crown can last, with constant
5 use after the blackout, for six hours, compared to the
6 Ultratec machine that doesn't work at all.

7 If you look at the emergency situation, who is safe?
8 For example, if a deaf person had a spouse who have a heart
9 attack, and you have a blackout at the same time, and they
10 have Ultratec distributed TTYs here in Florida, and it doesn't
11 work in the blackout. Now the phone line is working, but the
12 TTY doesn't. Who to blame if that person dies from a heart
13 attack not getting an emergency call? Crown has a machine to
14 work beyond the blackout. I don't see why Crown can't be
15 distributed in Florida.

16 Second, we've got a brand-new -- another issue is
17 TeleBraille for the deaf-blind. James Foster (phonetic)
18 refused to look at the TeleBraille from Crown. That's what
19 Sid sent me -- oh, he's not here. I have got a certificate
20 here to pass out to each member of the board on the TTY and
21 the TeleBraille, if you don't mind me passing these out.

22 MS. SALAK: That would be fine. Careful.

23 MR. J. CASEY: Can you give this to the person who is
24 not here today?

25 MS. SALAK: Sure. We sure will. Thank you.

1 MR. J. CASEY: Two people from Crown flew here to
2 Florida and met with the FTRI Board and asked for a tabulation
3 of the bids, and they were refused to be given. And I think
4 it sounds strange to me why they would refuse to be given.
5 When people pay the phone rate, that money pays for these TTYs
6 people get free. How can Crown make a proper bid without
7 knowing those tabulations? I think it's not hitting private
8 like they say, it's in the nonprofit organization. I would
9 like you as a board to look into this. And I think that we
10 have the right to have that tabulation.

11 MS. SALAK: I can certainly follow up and talk to
12 Mr. Forstall about it and see what their bidding process is and
13 if those are available. I don't see James here any longer.

14 MR. J. CASEY: I thank you for your time.

15 MS. SALAK: Certainly, sir. Unless there are any last
16 comments, I would like to thank everybody for being here today.
17 I know we're going away with a lot of useful, useful information,
18 and we'll be following up on several items. I know there will be
19 a trip set up down to PRC, and people will be visiting there, and
20 then we will take our other comments. There will be a transcript
21 that will be put online, you will be able to check it on our Web
22 site and you will be able to get a full transcript of what
23 transpired today, and that should be up and running in a couple
24 of weeks. Okay. I saw that look, Susan. As soon as we can.

25 But we will certainly e-mail the TASA board members and

1 let them know when it's available. Yes, Jim?

2 MR. PETERSON: Maybe you can close the meeting. We've
3 enjoyed the two interpreters who have continuously worked all day
4 without a break, and we thank them.

5 MS. SALAK: Yes, and we do appreciate that. And our
6 CART reporter. Thank you very much all of you. It wouldn't be
7 possible for us without you. With that -- Mr. Casey, last
8 comment?

9 MR. J. CASEY: I forget to mention about the
10 TeleBraille. I would like to make a comment about it. One,
11 Crown manufactures the only true manufacturer of a Braille TTY
12 device. We are able to custom design the device to fit the
13 needs of a deaf/blind user. We have modified this unit to
14 even work with overseas companies. The other provider of a
15 TeleBraille phone cannot. We have a representative who is
16 able to train users on the Crown Braille/TTY device. The
17 person is an expert in Braille/TTY technology and is fluent in
18 sign language with deaf/blind individuals.

19 The current Braille/TTY user in Florida program is
20 extremely outdated and unable to be upgraded. This
21 combination of units consists of an outdated, approximately
22 ten years old, Ultratec TTY and a new ALBA ABT 320. The ALBA
23 ABT 320 is the same Braille unit that Crown uses. The TTY
24 that is used by Crown is a brand new device. Our technical
25 staff is able to repair and/or maintain any of the Crown

1 devices while the other manufacturer of the Braille TTY is
2 not. They have to send it to another company who repairs it.
3 Our Crown Braille TTY has the new optional face-to-face
4 keyboard that is an option to the state and/or to the user.
5 The other company, no.

6 That's the issue and information, I think you should
7 know about that. Thank you.

8 MS. SALAK: Thank you, Mr. Casey. Again, I want to
9 thank everyone for being here. I think it's been a fruitful
10 meeting. And our next meeting will be in -- our next TASA
11 meeting will be in Tallahassee, although I'm sure we'll have
12 several meetings in between. Thank you, Sprint, for being here.
13 Thank you, PRC, for being here. Thank you, TASA Board Members.
14 And most of all, thank you for the wonderful input that we've
15 gotten from everyone. Thank you.

16 (Meeting adjourned).
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1 STATE OF FLORIDA)
 2 : CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
 3 COUNTY OF LEON)

4
 5 I, JANE FAUROT, RPR, Chief, Office of Hearing Reporter
 6 Services, FPSC Division of Commission Clerk and Administrative
 7 Services, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was
 8 heard at the time and place herein stated.

9 IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that TANYA WARD ENGLISH, CART
 10 Reporter, stenographically reported the said proceedings; that
 11 I, JANE FAUROT, edited the transcript provided by TANYA WARD
 12 ENGLISH, and that this transcript constitutes a true
 13 transcription of her notes of said proceedings.

14 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee,
 15 attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative
 16 or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel
 17 connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in
 18 the action.

19 DATED THIS 25th day of September, 2003.

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Jane Faurot for

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